



Renton History Museum

MASTER PLAN

EXPERIMENTAL HISTORY PROJECT

FEBRUARY 2010

GYROSCOPE INC



This document was written & produced by:

GYROSCOPE INC

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SECTION 1 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Renton History Museum:

To preserve, document, interpret, and educate about the history of greater Renton in ways that are accessible to diverse people of all ages.

The vision of the Renton History Museum:

Capture the Past, Educate the Present, Inspire the Future

Possible Future Projects



The Master Planning Process

In June 2009, Renton History Museum (RHM) and the City of Renton engaged Gyroscope, Inc., a museum planning, architecture and design company from Oakland, California to develop a Master Plan for the Museum’s future. With significant input from the Museum staff and board, steering committee, local government, educational and cultural leaders, as well as a public meeting on October 22, 2009, Gyroscope developed this plan with the following goals:

- To determine community needs and interests
- To develop a program and facility to meet those needs
- To develop strategies for future growth and change

The planning process took place from July 2009 through January 2010 and included weekly conference calls, on-line Web sharing group meetings, on-line Web presentations, a shared work group Web site set up by RHM for all participants to exchange ideas and documents, site visits to other local museums, and phone interviews with ten individuals from the Renton Community and ten local history museums. All of the interim reports are included in the appendices of this document.

The planning effort comprised six stages:

1. Background Research
2. Project Kickoff Meeting
3. What We Heard
4. Mid-Study Progress Report
5. Preliminary Findings
6. Preparation of Final Master Plan

Background Research

Gyroscope reviewed existing documents provided by RHM including the 2007 Strategic Planning Document, the 2007 MAP report, the 2008 CAP assessment, the King County Equity & Social Justice Plan 2008, the Renton Library Master Plan, Washington State Curriculum, as well as other publications relevant to this project.

We also reviewed data from various government Web sites to determine demographics, income and educational levels of Renton residents, population growth potential, land use, cultural events, park and school locations, and potential annexation.

We analyzed RHM’s existing location, its neighbors, its proximity to the Library, Liberty Park, and downtown, as well as existing traffic patterns impacting RHM. We also reviewed data from a large number of comparable institutions in the region and nationally.

Project Kickoff Meetings

Beginning July 9, 2009, Gyroscope facilitated two days of meetings in Renton with Museum staff and trustees, the project Steering Committee, the Mayor, City Administrative Officer, Council President and other key City staff, and other RHM stakeholders from the community. These meetings explored the Museum’s current identity in the community, and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of current exhibits, programs, collections, outreach, publications, research, technology use, retail and amenities.

During this first visit to Renton, Gyroscope toured with RHM staff, the existing Museum and off-site storage locations and identified strengths and weaknesses of the existing facility, its collections, preparation areas, public spaces, offices, storage and site.

Master Planning Information Sources



What We Heard

During this stage, Gyroscope conducted interviews with key Museum stakeholders and representatives of local and regional cultural organizations with recent master planning experience relevant to RHM’s planning. Gyroscope followed up these interviews with additional research to understand both context and relevance of suggestions offered by the interviewees.

Community and Stakeholder Interviews	
Bette Anderson	Director of Renton Public Library
Earline Bala	Native American Coordinator, Renton Public Schools
Karen Bergsvik	Human Services Manager, City of Renton
Cassie Chinn	Executive Director, Wing Luke Cultural Center
Jennifer Davis Hayes	Downtown Coordinator Community & Economic Development, City of Renton
Dan Kellogg	President, Renton Rotary Club
Aaron Oesting	Assistant Director, Renton Public Library
Jenna Pollock	Curriculum and Technology Specialist Basic Studies Department Renton Technical College
Eric Taylor	Heritage Coordinator, 4Culture
Bill Taylor	President, Renton Chamber of Commerce

The stage concluded with a Web conference during which Gyroscope reviewed RHM’s recent history and strategic goals, presented what was learned from the community interviews and other related research carried out during this stage, and presented an analysis of key issues and opportunities that had emerged during the work to date.



Project Meetings



Web conference

Entitled “What We Heard,” the Web presentation included an analysis of RHM’s site and facilities, the area’s demographics, and operating data from comparable museums in the region. The report concluded with five promising options for RHM’s new strategic direction:

- 1. **The History Workshop**, a place for engaging Renton families in intergenerational research, documentation and storytelling.
- 2. **The Big Tent**, a program network based on partnerships with RHM as the hub and partner venues providing new audiences and visibility for RHM.
- 3. **The Vault**, a public center for storytelling and research with visible collections and accessible archives configured for personal historical research.
- 4. **The Renton Cultural Center**, a multidisciplinary hub for Renton’s cultural life that brings history together with the arts and civic dialogue.
- 5. **The Experimental History Project**, an ever-changing testbed for exploring what history is, how it can be presented and how it can serve community needs.

Mid-study Progress Report

From the five options presented in the “What We Heard Report,” RHM selected the Renton Cultural Center and the Experimental History Project for further development. Gyroscope presented each of these in greater detail in meetings held in Renton on October 22-23, 2009.

For each of the two directions, Gyroscope presented a core idea, key strategies, relevant media and techniques, program examples and the implications/challenges of implementing the direction. At the end of the presentation, RHM staff and trustees were asked for reactions and questions.

The group’s discussion about the relative merits of the two options focused mainly on implementation requirements. The EHP emerged as the preferred direction because of its shorter timeline, lower capital costs, compatibility with the Museum’s existing building, and inherent flexibility. Several of the participants noted that EHP might serve as a transition to a future Renton Cultural Center.

Preliminary Findings Report

Following confirmation from RHM on November 3 that the Experimental History Project was the preferred direction for further development, Gyroscope prepared a report that was presented by Web conference on November 17, 2009 to RHM and its trustees.

The presentation included a review of the EHP core idea, key strategies, media and methods and implications/challenges. It also included a revised and more detailed description of EHP program types than was included in the Mid-Study Report. Gyroscope proposed that EHP be focused on the experimental goals of strengthening Renton’s social fabric, creating a forum for contemporary civic issues and advancing the field of historical interpretation.

In addition to descriptive content for EHP, Gyroscope produced diagrams and preliminary concepts for architectural changes related to implementation of EHP. Key objectives were to increase visibility and connectivity, and to strengthen RHM’s relationship to pedestrian routes.

“It is important not to lose what Renton is about. The Museum could find a way to celebrate what happened in the past, but show that changes are always happening.”

Comparable Institutions

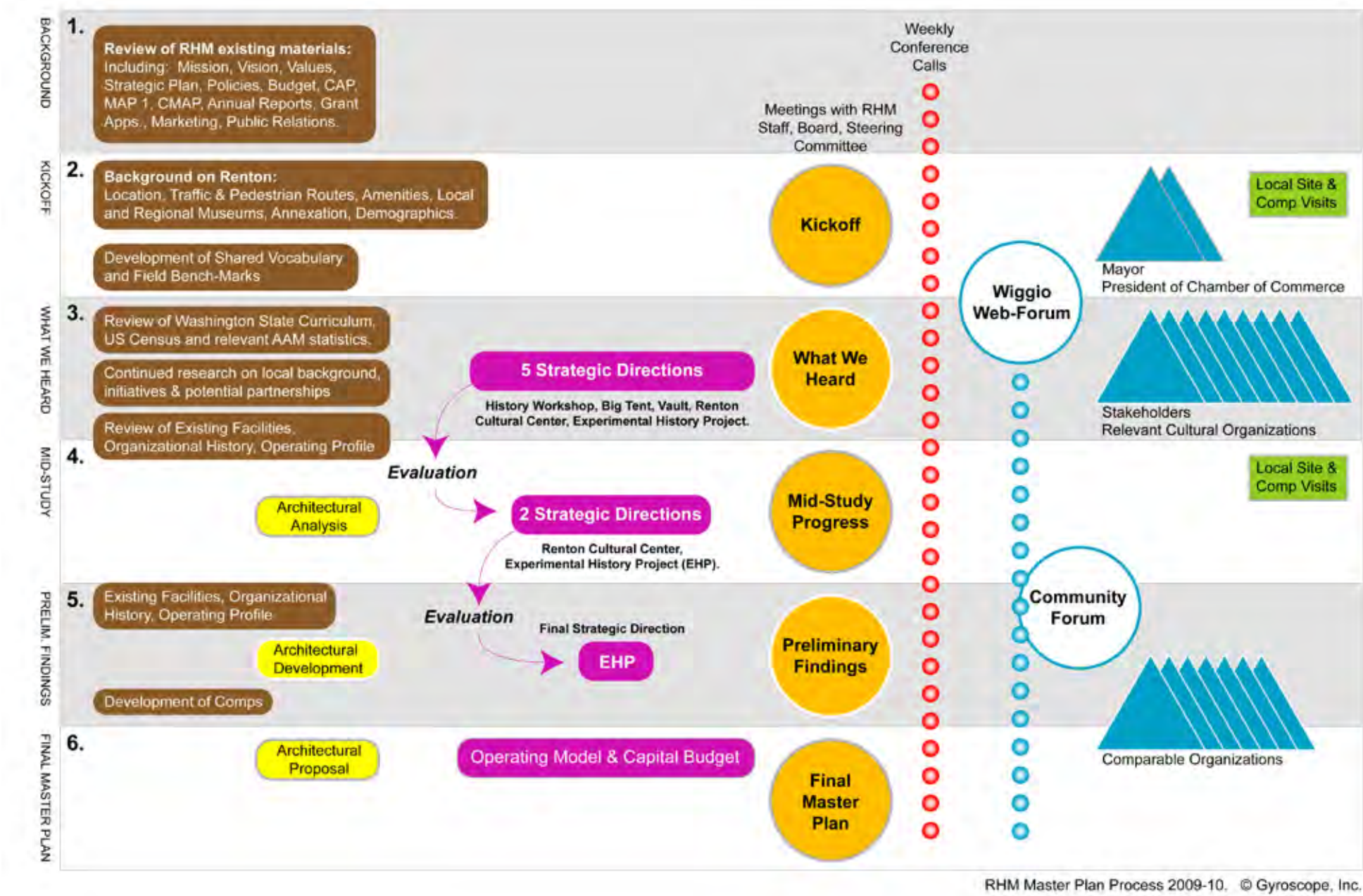
In order to understand RHM in the context of other history museums and centers, Gyroscope researched in greater depth the seven similar institutions listed below. These were all community history museums located in western Washington that reported an annual attendance between 4,000 and 10,000. The research was conducted using each institution’s financial reports, the American Association of Museums’ 2009 Official Museum Directory, the U.S. Census Bureau, and approximately 30-minute interviews with the museums’ directors.

- Clallam County Historical Society
- Clark County Historical Museum
- Cowlitz County Historical Museum
- Highline Historical Society
- Jefferson County Historical Society
- Shoreline Historical Museum
- White River Valley Museum

Preparation of Final Master Plan

The last phase of the project was the preparation of this report. During this time, as it did throughout the project, Gyroscope held weekly phone meetings with RHM Director, Elizabeth P. Stewart, to review progress and discuss any questions or issues that had emerged along the way. The final step in the process is presentation of the plan to the Steering Committee, the Board of Trustees of the Renton Historical Society, and the Renton City Council.

The Project at a Glance



The Vision

The Renton History Museum’s new strategic direction is the Experimental History Project (EHP), a dynamic series of changing installations and other programs that experiment with historical interpretation and community service. For the Museum, this direction offers multiple opportunities for growth in attendance, audience diversity, institutional capacity, and community support. For Renton, it offers new opportunities to connect the City’s past to its future and to strengthen the fabric of a community that has experienced very rapid growth in both territory and cultural diversity.

“Local history should show the significance of the place in a broader context and it’s relevance to people’s lives today. To achieve this it is important to innovate and experiment.”

A Changing Museum For a Changing Renton

At its core, EHP is about consciously and repeatedly revisiting key questions and assumptions about history-making: What themes, events, topics and stories are of historical importance? To whom? How are these to be interpreted and represented in the present? Whose voices and perspectives should be included? Who gets to decide?

By sampling multiple answers to these questions through a continually changing set of exhibitions, RHM hopes to create not only a more exciting public program, but one that is much more responsive to community needs. EHP is above all a framework for continuously exploring how Renton’s past and present can come together in ways that offer real value to the residents of the City.

EHP leaves behind the model of museum-as-authority and invites the Museum’s public to participate in an ongoing conversation about making and understanding history. It is an approach that takes strategic risks to involve new audiences in the excitement of asking and answering historical questions.

At present, RHM centers on the stories of “Old” Renton: the pioneer families that founded the city, the succession of industries that shaped its economic trajectory, the wars and other global events that buffeted its course. These are worthy themes and will remain so under EHP, but they are not sufficient for a city that now boasts eighty-seven languages, rapidly expanding territory and more than double the population of just a few years before. This new Renton needs a history museum in which all of Renton’s citizens can see themselves and their stories—a place where everyone’s history has a home.

How the past matters in the present is much more than as a catalog of positive and negative examples—good and bad lessons to be learned. An ongoing and public effort to make sense of Renton’s history in relation to its ever-changing present concerns and future directions is an opportunity for civic conversation, shared meaning-making, and the kind of community-building that is crucial to a rapidly growing place like Renton. RHM’s new direction positions the Museum at the center of that effort and offers exciting possibilities for it to serve both as a catalyst and a forum for community dialogue.

Over time, EHP’s experiments could take many directions. Some might involve revisiting old stories from new angles by mixing history with art or science. For example, the Museum could put out a call for proposals to local and national artists for work related to the City’s coal mining or industrial past. Engineers, geologists, and other scientists might be included to provide other perspectives, as well as augmenting installations with the Museum’s collections as appropriate.

Another option might involve taking on unconventional topics such as Renton’s history of UFO sightings as an unusual perspective on the City’s aviation history: first-person interviews, newspaper articles, and photos could be solicited from well-respected local pilots to tell this story in their own words.

Other experiments might involve more direct community participation such as a large-scale oral history project conducted by school children, a collection of house histories by their current owners, or a cell phone tour of Renton historical sites that includes content produced by residents themselves.



RHM Web site

Building on the success of ESL exhibits

Regardless of the media and techniques employed, RHM would favor themes and topics with strong links to contemporary issues and strong potential or appeal across generational and cultural boundaries. An example might be a project that probes the theme of immigration or pioneering from Renton’s earliest days to the present in ways that knit together the stories of the City’s founding families with those of its most recent arrivals. Other projects might examine the experience of Renton and Rentonites during times of war, epidemic, or economic crisis.

EHP Benefits and Opportunities

- Increased program capacity and change
- Audience growth
- Institutional responsiveness
- To be a model for the museum field
- To be a catalyst and a forum for the community

EHP Challenges

- Changing community perceptions
- Ongoing program funding
- Adequate staffing
- Stronger marketing
- Community relations

Key Strategies

Keep experimenting

EHP is a framework for continuous change in all aspects of the Museum’s operations. Although this may seem risky, it is actually the surest path for RHM to remain relevant and responsive to its community over time. Individual EHP projects may fare better or worse, but as a well-thought-out multi-year series they will allow RHM to adapt and grow in ways that a more static approach could never match. EHP may ensure that a wholesale re-working of museum operations will not be necessary again in the future.

Target new constituencies

A continuously changing program also will allow RHM to broaden its base by choosing projects to target new audiences and acquire new stakeholders. The challenge, of course, is to bring along existing supporters while acquiring new ones, but that is a better problem to have than to be lacking the means or prospects for growth. A related concern is the need to incorporate these new constituencies into the board and staff of the organization.

Share control

Along with partnerships and a broader community focus comes the need to share control of RHM’s program. This may take many forms ranging from guest curators and invited artists to visitor-contributed content and online dialogue. RHM’s new direction may at times require the Museum to step back into the role of facilitator rather than direct presenter. An improved Web site will be needed to accomplish that goal.

Accumulate assets through projects

Working in a series of temporary projects puts a premium on remembering what is learned along the way and saving assets of long-term value to the organization and the community. These might range broadly from reusable furniture and equipment to archives of visitor-contributed content to institutional assets like new community partnerships or collaboration processes.



Partner for what you need

To achieve the capacity that EHP requires, RHM will need strong partnerships with individuals and organizations throughout Renton and the surrounding area. The products of these relationships might include skilled personnel such as guest curators or professional consultants, access to other collections, alternative program venues, and both direct funding and in-kind support.

Use collections as a flexible resource

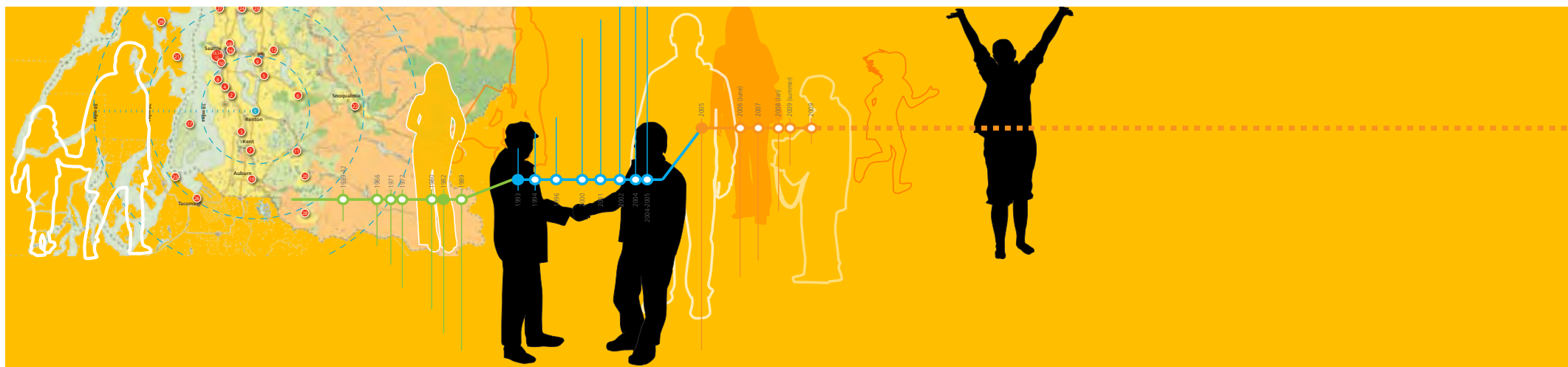
The Museum’s collections will remain an important asset, but they will be used differently than before. Long-term display of a relatively small portion of the collection will give way to a continuous sampling of the collections as required by the various projects; Web-based exhibits may also showcase collections. The broader content scope of the new direction may also lead to more short-term borrowing of objects not in the RHM collections, both from other museums and from Renton residents.

Acquire flexible infrastructure

To implement EHP, RHM will de-install all of its current permanent exhibits and transform its exhibition space into a flexible temporary gallery. In addition to some relatively minor architectural modifications, this will require reusable assets such as movable wall and lighting systems, audiovisual equipment, and display furniture. To the extent possible, these assets should be acquired up front, using capital funds to reduce the cost of projects later on.

Use the Web to connect

The Museum’s communication needs will increase greatly with EHP. Gyroscope recommends that RHM strengthen its online presence and use it to support dialogue with and among the new and old audiences it needs to engage.



SECTION 2

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Overview

In June 2009, Renton History Museum (RHM) and the City of Renton engaged Gyroscope, Inc., a museum planning, architecture and design company from Oakland, California to develop a Master Plan for the museum’s future. With significant input from the museum staff and board, steering committee, local government, educational and cultural leaders, as well as feedback from a public meeting on October 22, 2009, Gyroscope developed this plan with the following goals:

- To determine community needs and interests
- To develop a program and facility to meet those needs
- To develop strategies for future growth and change.

The planning process took place from July 2009 through January 2010 and included weekly conference calls, on-line Web sharing group meetings, on-line Web presentations, a shared work group Web site set up by RHM for all participants to exchange ideas and documents, site visits to other local museums, and phone interviews with ten local history museums and ten individuals from the Renton Community.

In addition, Gyroscope met with the Museum’s Board, Steering Committee, and a group of young Renton innovators and entrepreneurs to hear their ideas for the Museum’s future.

The planning effort comprised six stages:

- 1. Background Research
- 2. Project Kickoff Meetings
- 3. What We Heard Report
- 4. Mid-Study Progress Report
- 5. Preliminary Findings
- 6. Preparation of Final Master Plan

These stages are described below along with key findings and other products of the work in each stage.

Background Research

Gyroscope reviewed existing documents provided by RHM including the 2007 Strategic Planning Document, the 2007 MAP report, the 2008 CAP architectural assessment, the King County Equity & Social Justice Plan 2008, the Renton Public Library Master Plan, and Washington State Curriculum, as well as other publications relevant to this project. A full bibliography can be found in the Appendix.

We also reviewed data from various government Web sites to determine demographics, income and educational levels of Renton residents, population growth potential, land use, park and school locations, and potential annexation.

We analyzed RHM’s existing location, its neighbors, and its proximity to the Library, park and downtown, as well as existing traffic patterns impacting RHM.

At the kick-off meeting in July 2009, RHM’s board members suggested other local regional museums that might be potential models or inspirational for RHM. Gyroscope researched the following museums:

- Prince Rupert Museum
- Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center
- Loghouse Museum
- White River Valley Museum
- Wing Luke Asian Museum
- Bend Historical Museum
- Provincial Museum
- Slave Market Museum
- Indian School Museum

To understand the competitive market, Gyroscope also identified 30 other regional museums within 30 miles of Renton, and reviewed published attendance numbers from the American Association of Museum’s 2008 Survey for all Washington state history museums and regional museums.



Museum of Northern B.C.



Duwamish Longhouse



Heinz Museum



White River Valley



Wing Luke Museum

“The City . . . is going through a transition of how they think about themselves and the Museum could be part of that. It could appeal to folks who grew up in this town and also people whose history didn’t come from Renton, but who are themselves now part of the community.”

To understand the leisure market and opportunities in Renton, Gyroscope prepared a local events calendar based on published information from various arts and culture organizations in Renton.

All of the detail from this research can be found in the appendices of this report.

Project Kickoff Meetings

Beginning July 9, 2009, Gyroscope facilitated two days of meetings in Renton with Museum staff and trustees, the project Steering Committee, the Mayor, Chief Administrative Office, Council President and other key City staff, and other RHM stakeholders from the community. These meetings explored the Museum’s current identity, community expectations, and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of current exhibits, programs, collections, outreach, publications, research, technology use, retail and amenities.

During this first meeting, Gyroscope toured the existing museum and off-site storage locations with RHM staff and identified strengths and weaknesses of the existing facility, its collections, preparation areas, public spaces, offices, storage and site.

Vision and Values, Audience and SWOT Exercises

During the kick-off with the RHM Board, Gyroscope led a series of exercises to determine shared Vision and Values, Audiences and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

For the **Vision and Values exercise**, each participant filled out a worksheet that asked them to select words that best represented their thinking about the organization’s ideal audience, their vision for the future of the organization, and the core values that the organization holds. Three clusters emerged as expressing the core values of the organization:

1. **Serving as a Community Resource / Community / Diversity / Collaborations / Partnerships**

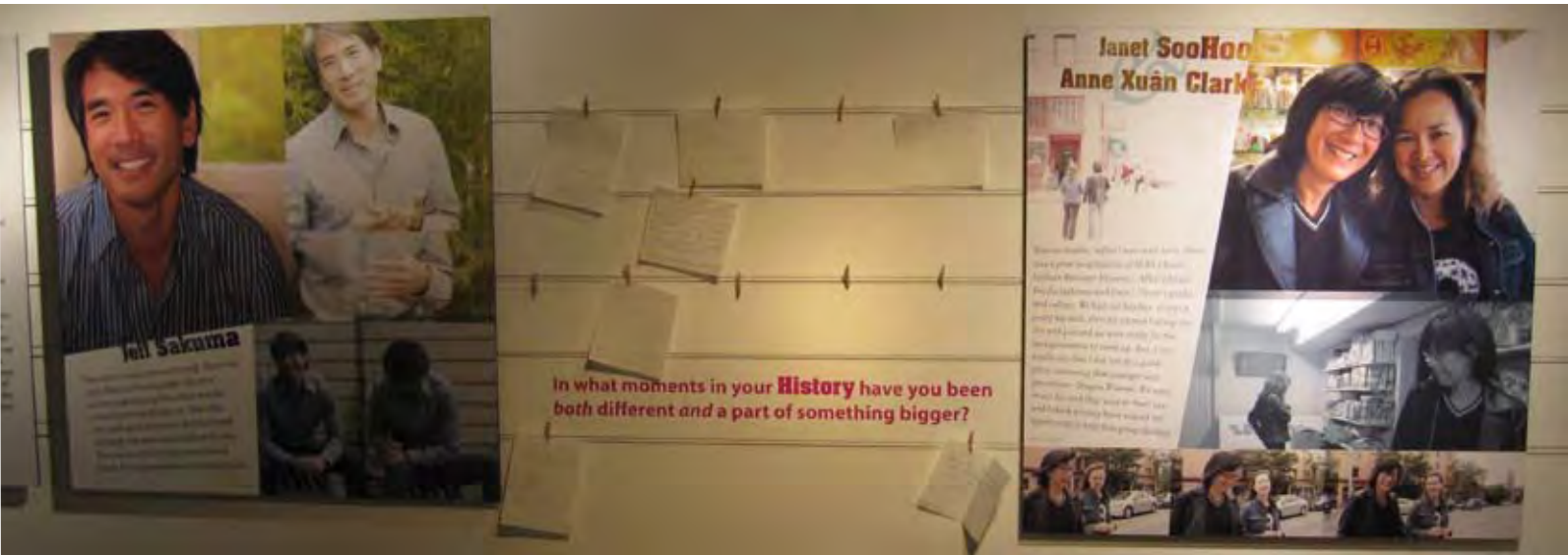
The group defined community as the fullest expression of what the organization should be. It encompasses diversity (ethnic and generational), and respect of disciplines and culture. This cluster expresses the Museum’s appreciation of the value of being connected to the community as well as of supporting the community.
2. **Preservation / Stewardship / Collecting**

These values speak to the integrity of the Museum’s operations, its role in protecting and preserving the history of the community, and its function as caretaker for the collection.
3. **Education / Fostering Civic Dialogue/ Inspire**

These three concepts together express a belief in serving as a safe place for the exchange of ideas around topics that affect people’s lives. They describe an organization that is willing to tackle tough issues with respect, host conversations, and act as an ethical, honest facilitator at the heart of the learning community. The Museum does not aspire to be activist, but would like to use artifacts as a way to foster discussion and promote understanding. Civic dialogue may be important, in part, as a City agency. Dialogue is a newer direction for the Museum. So these values represent the trajectory the Museum is on.

These other values were also selected as important:

- **Economic Development**
- **Innovation:** need to stand out, approaching old problems in a new way
- **Growth:** of the organization



Community Gallery, Wing Luke Asian Museum

For the **Audience Exercise**, participants filled out a worksheet that asked them to select those words that best represent their thinking about the organization’s ideal audience. The results of this were as follows:

1. **Families** were identified as the most important audience for RHM. The family audience is multi-generational, and the group recognizes the importance of reaching children and inculcating a respect and appreciation for history when folks are young. Families is also seen as a very inclusive category.
2. **Education Community / Partners**

Schools, community groups, and local businesses were repeatedly identified as a core audience for the Museum.
3. **Repeat Users / Locals** are central to the vision for RHM to serve as a community resource. This audience is seen as getting the greatest value from the Museum. The Museum’s first obligation is seen as serving the local population rather than a broad national audience.

A number of secondary audiences were also noted as important to the organization’s ongoing health and sustainability:

- **People connected to Renton:** There are many long-time Renton families that have begun moving away from the City. Continuing the relationship with these families is important to fundraising.

- **Scholars:** RHM wants to be positioned as the place to dig into history and conduct research.
- **First-Time Visitors:** Although repeat visitation is the goal, it is important to make a good first impression on new visitors. The group felt that this was something to keep in mind and that it could influence future decisions about the Museum’s offerings.
- **Seniors:** RHM has historically focused most programming around seniors. This audience tends to be strong supporters of the organization. It is important that RHM not leave them behind in its new vision.
- **New Residents:** Everyone living in Renton, whether a new resident, or someone from an established family, originally came from somewhere else. There is a strong desire for RHM to reach a broader and more diverse audience than it currently does.
- **Tourists:** The Board all agreed RHM should focus on the local population.

Tim Phillips

A third exercise focused on **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)**. The group noted the strength of RHM’s unique service, its professional staff, its loyal existing audience and the new momentum created by hosting the SITES “Key Ingredients” exhibit and the annual ESL exhibits. As weaknesses they mentioned RHM’s aging audience, its lack of clear identity, its limited number of partnerships, fundraising capacity and connections to the new Renton.

Most of the discussion focused on **opportunities**. The group identified several clusters of opportunity that together describe the open niche for RHM.

- 1. **Creativity, Keeping History Relevant, Storytelling and Imagination** emerged as the biggest opportunity for RHM. The Board understood this to mean that there is an open opportunity to tell history stories in creative ways that relate history to the present and make it meaningful to today’s residents. Part of this is putting history and artifacts into a context that brings them to life for current residents.
- 2. **Community Pride / Supporting a learning culture.** Renton is seen as a place that has a lot to be proud of, but which sees itself as living in Seattle’s more glamorous and exciting shadow. There is a need to recognize and promote the contributions Renton has made and to invest in the development of a learning culture for the future. The Museum is seen as a place that can both bring people together and tell important stories from Renton’s past throughout the community. At the same time, this would position RHM as a leader in the civic sector as an institution that is working to lead the community’s culture.
- 3. **Multi-disciplinary Approach and Curiosity, Exploration, Discovery, Inquiry** There is an opportunity to blend disciplines such as art, music, food, and the environment together with the historical stories. One goal of looking at history through many lenses that are not always associated with history is to broaden its appeal, diversify the exhibition style, and invite curiosity, exploration, discovery, and inquiry. A mix of disciplines is also seen as a set of tools that can help RHM move to where it wants to be.

RHM Strengths

- Unique service to local community
- Welcoming “folksy” atmosphere
- Professional staff
- CAP and MAP Assessments provide a clear analysis
- New partnerships have expanded museum audience and relevance
- Existing audience (seniors) is loyal
- Endowment and City funding provide some short-term security
- Oral history and Photography collections
- Momentum has been building
- “Key Ingredients” exhibit brought new visibility

RHM Challenges

- Aging audience
- Lack of clear identity: 2 names, graphic identity, 2 Web sites
- Reluctance to choose a single direction
- Lack of capacity in fundraising and earned income
- Understanding of audience and ability to connect to their interests
- Lack of key partnerships
- Lack of capacity for new technologies
- Collection strategy that accommodates digital media
- Access to groups from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Limits of site and facilities

RHM Opportunities

- Changing demographics represent an untapped audience.
- New city initiatives including the artist registry, the diversity council and downtown redevelopment may provide access to new relationships.
- There is room in Renton for an organization willing to take risks to create new collaborations and function as the hub of the cultural community while building visibility for Renton’s cultural contributions.
- No other local organization offers interactive, hands-on learning or brings together history, arts and culture
- Arts and Culture Master Plan

The group also discussed visitor learning behaviors that represent opportunities for the Museum:

- 1. **Learning about Renton’s History / Learning from the Museum**
This is understood to be the reason RHM exists and the primary behavior the organization wants to nurture.
- 2. **Documenting experiences and ideas by making things**
This type of activity in the Museum is seen as an opportunity to engage visitors more deeply. Renton has been known in the past as a manufacturing city, from bricks, to glassworks, to airplanes. Hands-on experiences could help to forge connections among the past, present and future—between what Renton was and where it’s heading. Making things also goes along with attracting families, school groups, and offering multidisciplinary activities.
- 3. **Listening to and telling personal stories**
Engaging the audience through personal storytelling was seen as a core value of keeping history relevant.

The participants also identified several other desirable behaviors that RHM can encourage through programming and exhibitions:

- Socializing
- Researching
- Dialogue and Debate
- Asking Questions
- Connecting to other social groups
- Inviting others to participate

The full report of the SWOT analysis can be found in the “What We Heard” Report attached as an appendix to this report.

What We Heard Report

During this stage, Gyroscope conducted phone interviews with key museum stakeholders and representatives of local and regional cultural organizations with recent master planning experience relevant to RHM’s planning. Gyroscope followed up these interviews with additional research to understand both context and the relevance of suggestions offered by the interviewees.

Areas of Agreement from Community Interviews

- Respect for Director Stewart and RHM staff
- The need to bridge between “old” and “new” Renton
- The diversity of the community represents an opportunity and a need
- Need to work with audiences to create offerings they will use
- Significant local fundraising will be challenging
- RHM needs to be more visible
- RHM needs a clear vision and unique expertise for success
- Renton is fiscally conservative
- Renton has an entrepreneurial class
- Rentonites undervalue what they have
- Renton has an attractive economic climate and appeals to families and new business
- Connecting past to present is the key to broader appeal and relevance
- RHM needs partnerships for both programs and operations
- Renton needs local meeting spaces and places to gather for public conversation
- Renton lacks a cultural center and hub
- RHM is a unique resource and serves a civic function

This phase concluded with a Web conference during which Gyroscope reviewed RHM’s recent history and strategic goals, presented what was learned from the community interviews and other related research carried out during this stage, and presented an analysis of key issues and opportunities that had emerged during the work to date.

Titled “What We Heard,” the Web presentation included an analysis of RHM’s site and facilities, the area’s demographics, and operating data from comparable museums in the region. The report concluded with five promising options for RHM’s new strategic direction. A copy of the presentation is included as an appendix to this report.

Gyroscope’s review of RHM’s history and strategic goals noted the Museum’s commitment to maintaining professional standards, to attracting a more diverse membership, to capturing and telling Renton’s stories, and to optimizing its facilities to support its mission. It also noted that RHM had achieved a lot, especially in the last three-and-a-half years, and that the Museum’s Board was clear and consistent in its understanding of the organization’s goals.

Less clear, however, is RHM’s intended geographical reach, its concept of what it means to be a history museum, and the relative emphasis on archival and educational functions.

Analysis of RHM’s operating profile revealed that the museum is attracting just under 4,000 annual visitors, fewer than some other comparable regional institutions, but fairly typical for local history museums. Visitors to RHM are local and older than the general population. School groups are not visiting the Museum as they have in the past, due in part to budget cuts.

Gyroscope’s review of RHM’s site covered key adjacencies, traffic flow and the location of RHM relative to Renton’s retail centers, other cultural organizations and its residential population. On the positive side, the site is centrally located, close to downtown, the library and Liberty Park and, as a historic building, a good context for RHM. On the negative side, the site is adjacent to heavy fast-moving traffic, not very visible, lacking in parking and limited in its expansion possibilities.

Implications for Audience Growth

- Reflect new audiences in the museum and its programs
- Design for participation and change
- Collaborate with the audience and engage them
- Design for interactivity and broad range of learning styles
- Make partnering a key strategy
- Plan for demographic changes

Further analysis of RHM attendance relative to comparable regional organizations showed the Museum to be near the median in size and staffing, but somewhat below average in attendance with respect to the size of its facilities, staff, and population base. Gyroscope noted that much of the published benchmark data is self-reported and variable in quality, but that the general patterns seemed to indicate that RHM has considerable upside potential for growth in attendance. The data used in this analysis are included in the appendices of this report.

Reviewing relevant demographic data from Renton and the region, Gyroscope noted that Renton has been growing rapidly in territory, population, and ethnic diversity. Compared with both King County and Washington State, the City’s population is very near the median in most categories, including age, income and education levels. It is a stable, family-oriented community with high levels of home ownership and length of residency. Although its residents seem to perceive Renton as a predominantly blue-collar town, it actually has a well-diversified economy with high levels of white collar and service-sector employment in addition to manufacturing.

Trends and Emerging Models in Museums

- Workshop spaces for making things
- Comfortable spaces for visitors to research their own questions
- Visible collections storage
- Mixing hands-on interactives with artifacts
- Using technology to layer information and add interactivity
- Providing opportunities for visitors to see their stories in the museum
- Using online technology to extend the museum’s reach
- Community collaboration and co-creation of exhibitions and programs

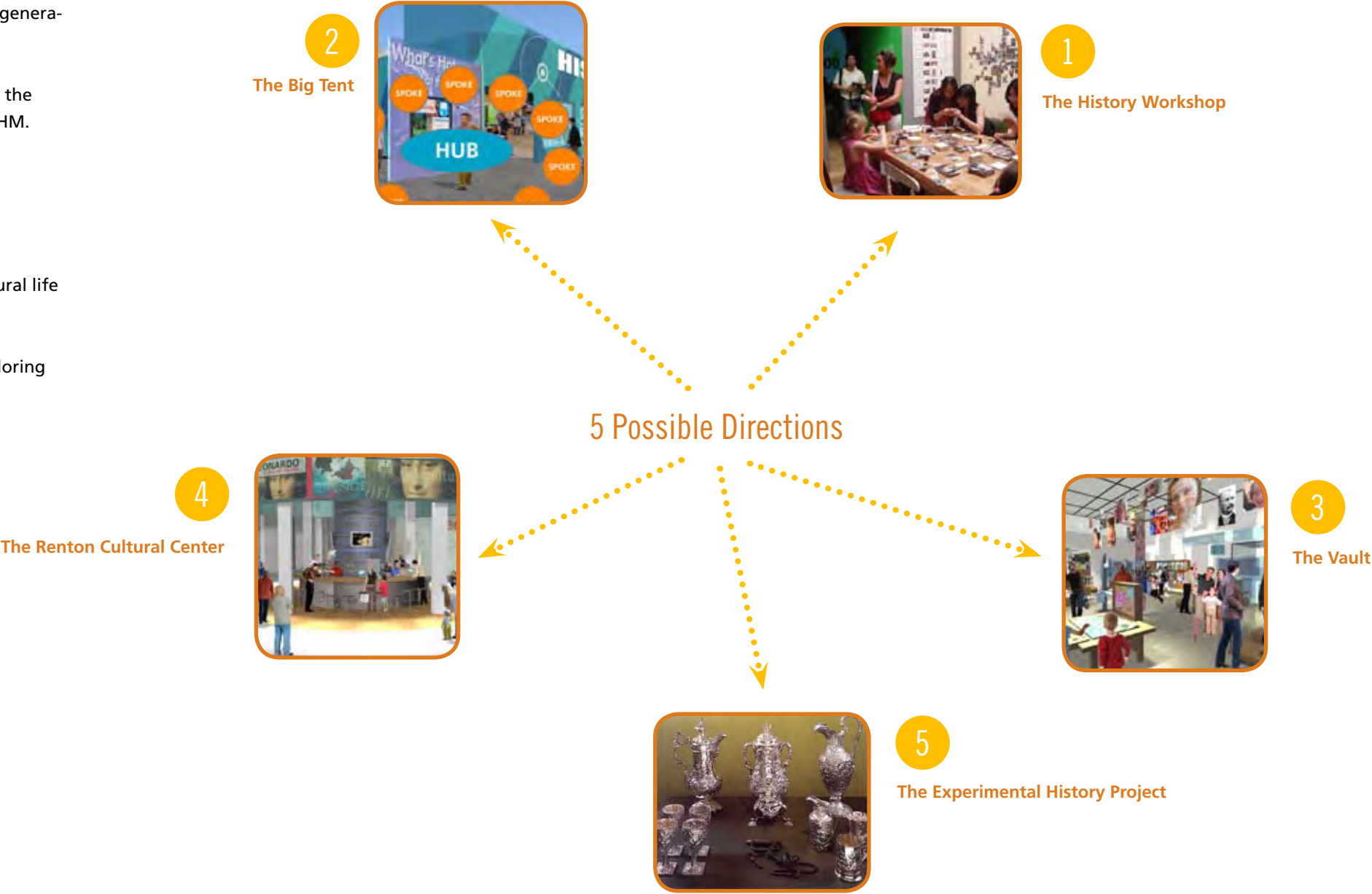
Possible Strategies for RHM

- Integrate media and technology
- Create collaborative learning experiences
- Emphasize intergenerational learning
- Foster discussion and debate
- Create open collections and conduct more research in/with public
- Provide opportunities for audiences to document their experiences by making things
- Incorporate storytelling and listening
- Outreach to new audiences
- Become a learning center rather than a history museum

Five Strategic Options

In the final section of the “What We Heard” Report, Gyroscope presented five options for RHM’s new strategic direction. The five options are described in more detail in an appendix to this report.

- 1. **The History Workshop**, a place for engaging Renton families in intergenerational research, documentation and storytelling.
- 2. **The Big Tent**, a program network based on partnerships with RHM as the hub and partner venues providing new audiences and visibility for RHM.
- 3. **The Vault**, a public center for storytelling and research with visible collections and accessible archives configured for personal historical research.
- 4. **The Renton Cultural Center**, a multidisciplinary hub for Renton’s cultural life that brings history together with the arts and civic dialogue.
- 5. **The Experimental History Project**, an ever-changing program for exploring what history is, and how it can be presented and how it can serve community needs.



MID-STUDY PROGRESS REPORT

“The idea of an arts and culture center would be cool and there is nothing like that in Renton. The History Museum has a potential to grow. . . . There is real potential to build audience among people who love Renton.”

From the five options presented in the “What We Heard” Report, RHM selected the Renton Cultural Center and the Experimental History Project for further development. Gyroscope presented each of these in greater detail in meetings held in Renton on October 22-23, 2009. A copy of the full presentation, “The Mid-study Progress Report” is included as an appendix to this document.

For each of the two strategic directions, Gyroscope presented a core idea, key strategies, relevant media and techniques, program examples and the implications/challenges of implementing the direction. At the end of the presentation, RHM staff and trustees were asked for reactions and questions.



Science Gallery Forum

Renton Cultural Center (RCC)

Core idea: RHM will become the community leader and forum for public dialogue concerning Renton’s past, present and future.

Key Strategies:

- Juxtapose past present and future
- Facilitate community dialogue
- Integrate other disciplines with history
- Partner for what you need
- Use collections as flexible resource
- Link to government and business
- Relocate

Techniques/Media

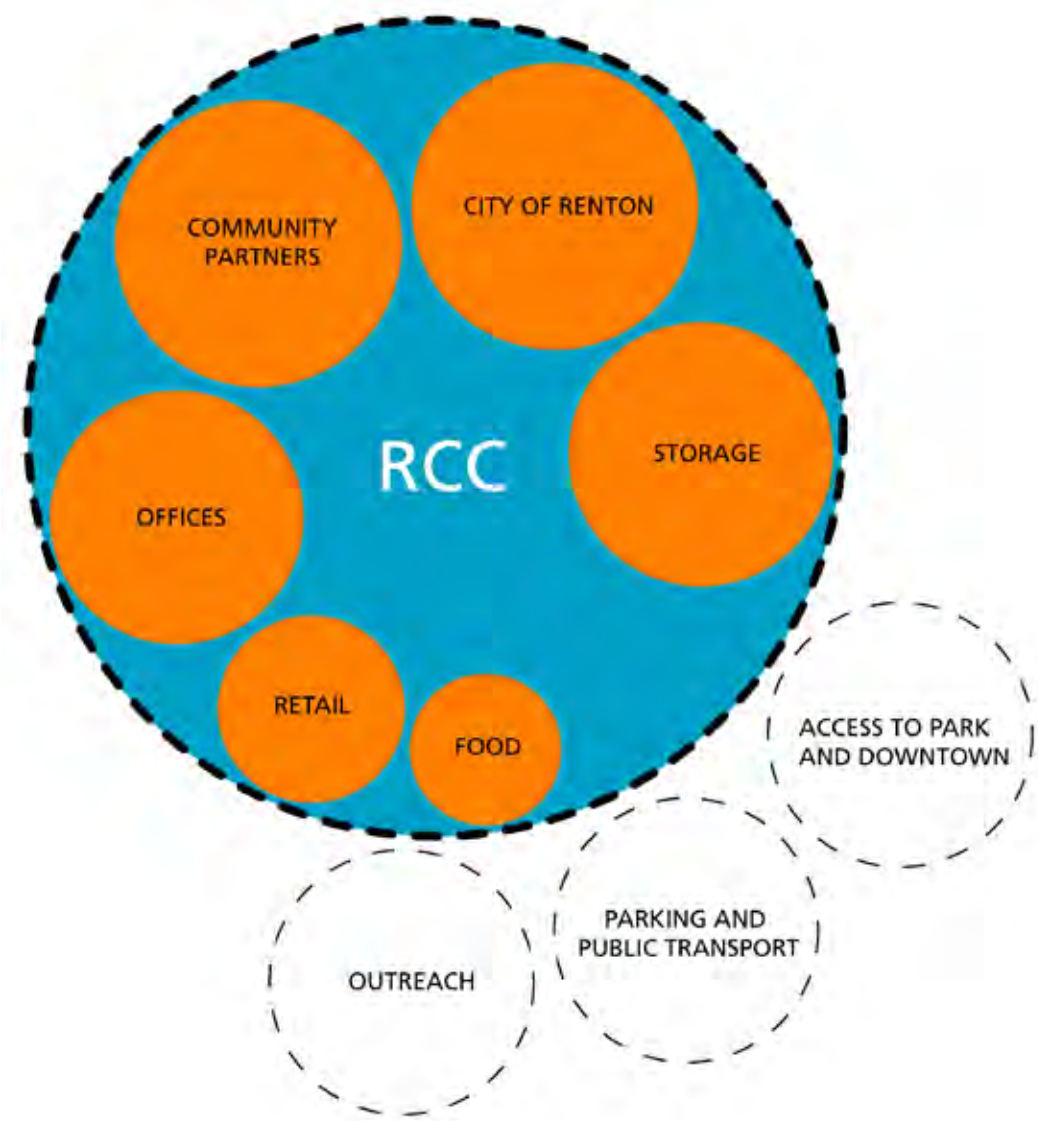
- Exhibitions/installations
- Online tools and resources
- Performances (theater, dance, music, talks, storytelling)
- Classes and workshops
- Events and festivals
- Public hearings
- Mapping and geographic information systems (GIS)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

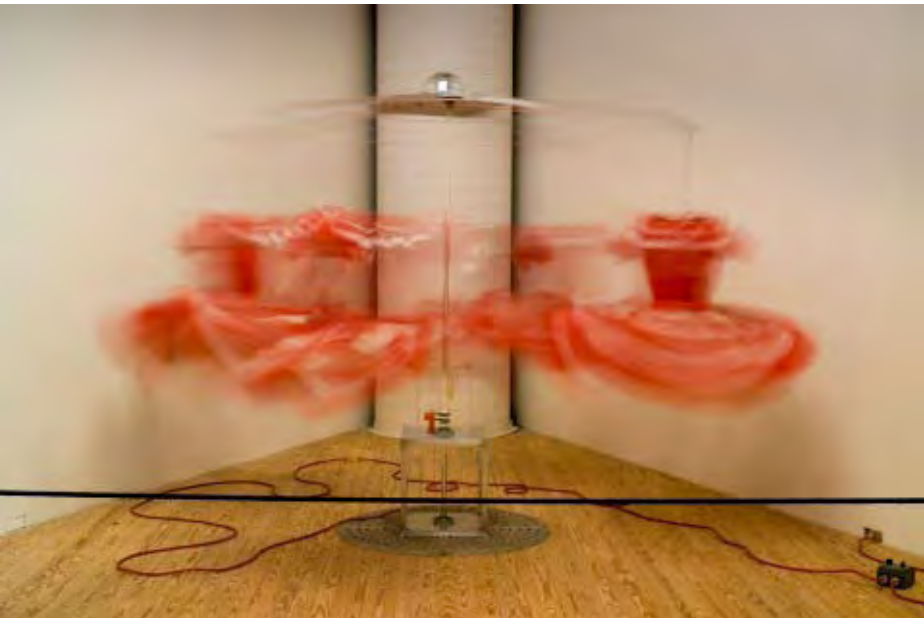
Program types

- Interactive mapping and GIS workshop
- Cultural festivals
- Temporary exhibitions
- Classes and workshops
- Citizen histories
- Business and government forums

Implications/challenges

- Eventual need for larger facility/new location
- Capital funding
- Operational funding
- Governance
- Branding
- Staffing
- Building and maintaining partnerships
- New operating assumptions





Cynthia Norton, Dancing Squared

©Rich Gardner Photography

Experimental History Project (EHP)

Core idea: RHM will become an organization for experimenting with interpreting, presenting and using history

Key Strategies:

- Experiment with history making
- Target new constituencies
- Share control
- Accumulate legacy
- Partner for what you need
- Use collections as flexible resource
- Develop flexible infrastructure

Techniques/Media

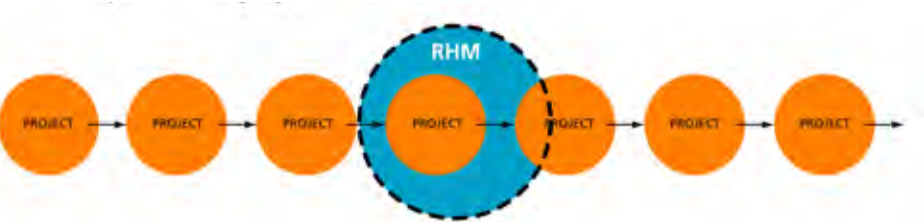
- Exhibitions/installations
- Online tools and resources
- Performances (theater, dance, music, talks, storytelling)
- Classes and workshops
- Events
- Collaborative curation
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Program types

- Artists on history
- Lab school (with UW Museum Studies)
- Immigrant histories
- Citizen histories
- Outsider histories

Implications/challenges

- No permanent exhibits
- Stream of project funding needed
- Sharing authority and control
- Branding off-site program efforts
- Flexible staffing and operations model



In the discussion following the meeting it became clear that RHM and the Trustees were leaning toward EHP. The group’s discussion about the relative merits of the two options focused mainly on implementation requirements. The EHP emerged as the preferred direction because of its shorter timeline, lower capital costs, compatibility with the Museum’s existing building, and inherent flexibility. Several of the participants noted that EHP might serve as a transition to a future Renton Cultural Center.

Preliminary Findings Report

Following confirmation from RHM on November 3 that the Experimental History Project was the preferred direction for further development, Gyroscope prepared a report that was presented by Web conference on November 17, 2009 to RHM and its trustees. This “Preliminary Findings Report” is included as an appendix to this document.

The presentation included a review of the EHP core idea, key strategies, media and methods and implications/challenges. It also included a revised and more detailed description of EHP program types than was included in the Mid-Study Report. Gyroscope proposed that EHP be focused on the experimental goals of strengthening Renton’s social fabric, creating a forum for contemporary civic issues, and advancing the field of historical interpretation.

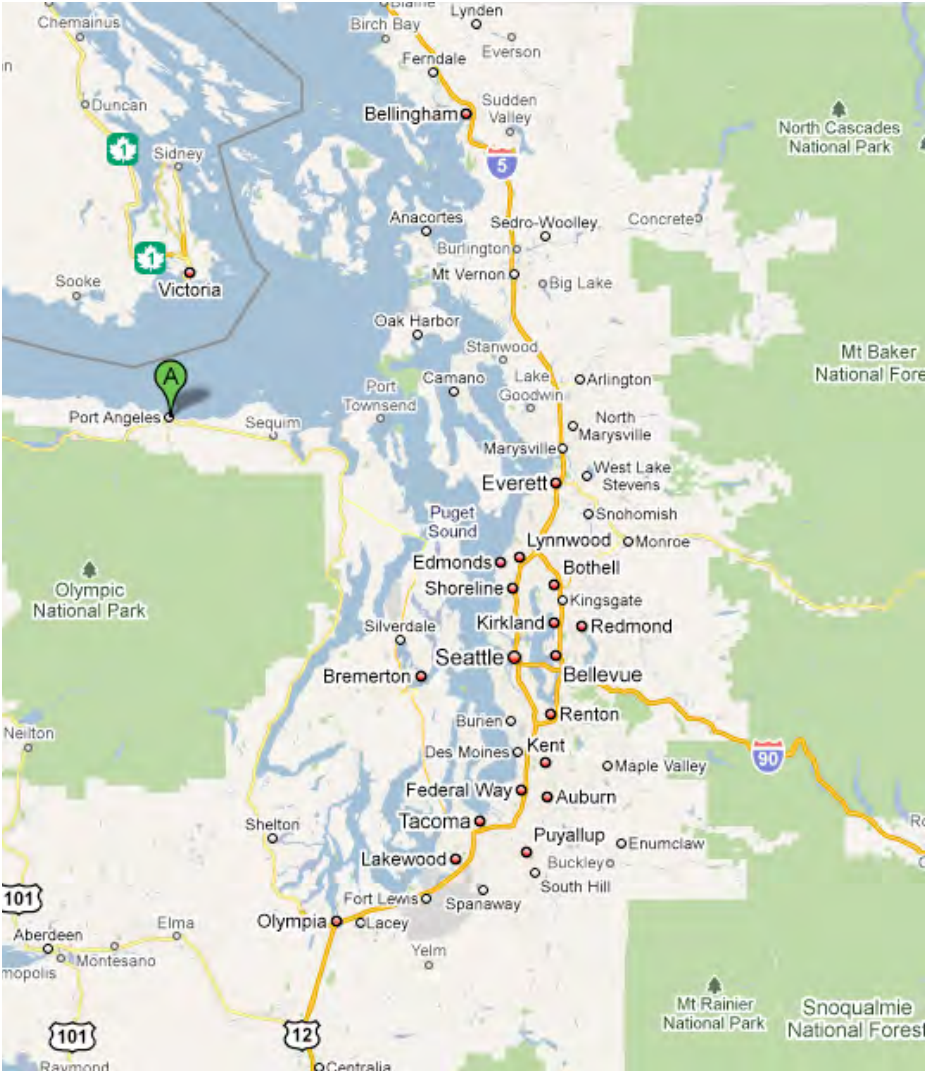
In addition to descriptive content for EHP, Gyroscope produced diagrams and preliminary concepts for architectural changes related to implementation of EHP. Key objectives were to increase visibility and connectivity, to energize the environment surrounding RHM, and to strengthen RHM’s relationship to pedestrian routes.

Preparation of Final Master Plan

The last phase of the master planning process was the preparation of this report. During this time, as it did throughout the project, Gyroscope held weekly phone meetings with RHM Director, Elizabeth P. Stewart, to review progress and discuss any questions or issues that had emerged along the way. The final step in the process is presentation of the plan to the Renton City Council and the Museum’s Board of Trustees.

Comparable Institutions

In order to understand RHM in the context of other history museums and centers, Gyroscope researched seven similar institutions. These were all community history museums located in western Washington and who reported an annual attendance between 4,000 and 10,000. The research was conducted using each institution’s financial reports, the American Association of Museums’ 2009 Official Museum Directory, the U.S. Census Bureau, and approximately 30-minute interviews with the museums’ directors.



Clallam County Historical Society

Date of Interview: December 3, 2009
Interviewee: Kathy Monds, Executive Director
Interviewer: Chuck Howarth and Lauren Merker, Gyroscope, Inc.

Profile

The Clallam County Historical Society (CCHS) is a small community history museum located in Port Angeles and serving the County of Clallam. Currently they maintain and operate an old school complex which encompasses three buildings in addition to their main exhibition space, the Carnegie Library. The Library houses approximately 4000 square feet of exhibits, offices, the research library, and their collections center.

The Clallam County Historical Society currently draws approximately 6-8,000 visitors per year to their facilities. They have a mix of local visitors and tourists coming through the museum. In the winter, however, their numbers drop off substantially. Because of their struggle to maintain healthy attendance numbers, CCHS has begun to increase their outreach to schools and other groups that cater to young people. While their hours of operation are restricted to Wednesday through Saturday, 1-4 PM, CCHS will open their facilities to school groups at any time. Kathy Monds attributes their ability to cater to these groups and to keep the museum running smoothly in general to a dedicated body of volunteers, many of which have been associated with the museum for decades.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

The recession has hit CCHS hard, as it has many cultural institutions throughout the country, and is evidenced by decreasing attendance numbers and their struggle to cover expenses. In fact, if CCHS does not see a turn-around during the next year, they will seriously consider breaking their lease with the city, thus making them exclusively a collections and research institution without regular public hours. Economic recessions are effective at weeding out institutions that are no longer viable in the lean marketplace. In order to avoid this fate, the Renton History Museum must continuously explore new and exciting ways to “preserve, document, interpret, and educate about the history of greater Renton” to a wide and diverse audience.

Clallam County Historical Society	
City	Port Angeles
Attendance	6-8,000
Annual Income 2008	\$65,998
Exhibition Square Footage	4,000
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	0
Adult Admissions	\$0
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	84
Miles from Renton	130
Household Population	18,400
Median Family Income	\$33,130



Clark County Historical Museum

Date of Interview: December 3, 2009
Interviewee: Susan Tissot, Executive Director
Interviewer: Lauren Merker, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile

The Clark County Historical Society and Museum (CCHM) is a museum of approximately 10,000 square feet and located 164 miles south of Seattle in Vancouver, Washington. Vancouver is similar to Renton in that it is a suburb of Portland and its community demographics are relatively the same, but it does attract more tourism. CCHM attracts an estimated 22,000 visitors per year, most of which are from local areas.

CCHM is located within a donated Carnegie Library that houses three galleries, a research library, collection storage, and office space. Within these walls, the Museum hosts their permanent collection, frequently changing exhibits, and many innovative public programs that succeed in attracting large and diverse crowds. Through ticket sales, individual donations, an active membership, and the museum store, CCHM brings in almost \$200,000 in annual revenue.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

Less than five years ago, Clark County Historical Museum was doing so poorly that they considered closing their doors to the public. The Board of Directors hired the current Executive Director, Susan Tissot, to reinvent the museum and bring it into the 21st century. She seems to have been successful at this task as the Museum is financially healthy and is attracting more (and more diverse) visitors than in recent history.

Their current programs and exhibitions are unique and purposefully target a younger audience than typically attends community history museums. For example, the Museum has begun a “First Thursdays” event which is an after-hours event that is marketed towards young couples and the after-work crowd. They also have a current exhibit called *Boomer!*—an exhibit that explores the way the baby boom generation changed American culture. Not surprisingly, this exhibit was very popular with members of the Baby Boomer generation and their families. Due to popular demand, the exhibition has been extended.



Clark County Historical Museum www.cchmuseum.org

CCHM is a prime example of a community history museum whose fresh and innovative approach to executing their mission of “collection, preservation, and interpretation of the cultural history of Clark County and the Pacific Northwest,” has propelled them into the modern-day and has allowed them to remain a community cornerstone institution.

Clark County Historical Museum	
City	Vancouver
Attendance	22,000
Annual Income 2008	\$191,779
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	3
Adult Admissions	\$4
Total Square Footage	10,000
Exhibition Square Footage	4,000
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	164
Miles from Renton	157
Household Population	164,000
Median Family Income	\$47,686



Cowlitz County Historical Museum

Date of Interview: December 7, 2009
Interviewee: Dave Freece, Executive Director
Interviewer: Lauren Merker, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile

The Cowlitz County Historical Museum (CCHM) was founded over 60 years ago in order to “discover, interpret, and disseminate the history of Cowlitz County and Southwest Washington.” Currently, CCHM estimates that they attract approximately 12,000 visitors annually, made up mostly of local residents. The population of Kelso is 92% white, relatively poor, and has a low education level. CCHM tries to serve that community through their exhibits, which focus on the specific history of Kelso and the local region as well as their programming, which includes a popular winter festival, a county fair, lectures, and a texting scavenger hunt. The Museum also publishes the Cowlitz Historical Quarterly as well as occasional books.

The Museum seems to be financially healthy, bringing in approximately \$194,600 in annual income. The county government and the Cowlitz Historical Society provide the majority of this revenue while the rest is procured through membership dues, endowment investments, and the museum store sales. In addition to paying for the general operations for the Museum, this income pays for one full-time and two part-time staff members.

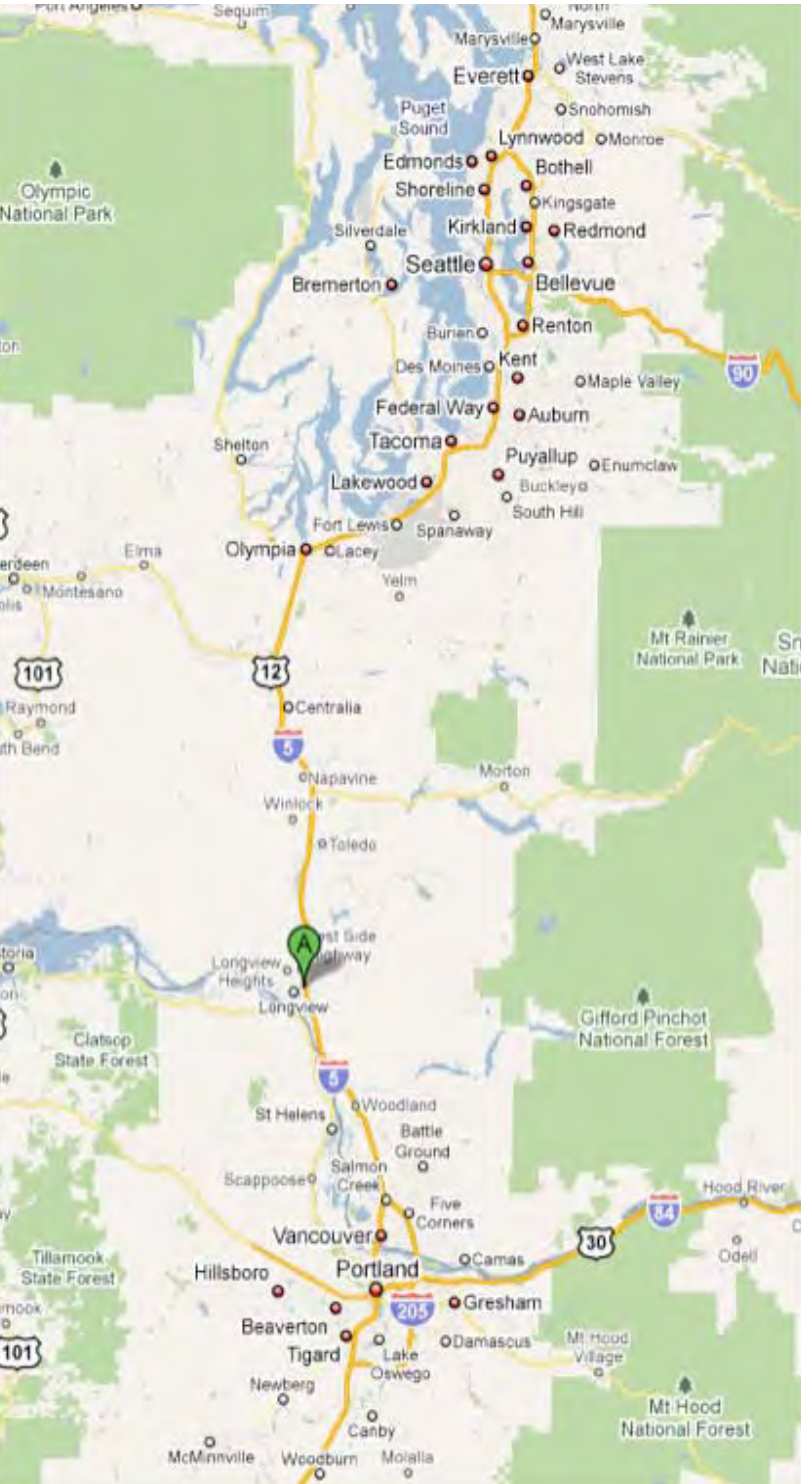
Implications for the Renton History Museum

Initially, CCHM seemed to be a viable comparable for the Renton History Museum. After learning more about CCHM and the city of Kelso, however, Gyroscope determined that due to the region’s demographic make-up and uncertainty about their actual attendance numbers, their relevance to Renton is limited.

However, Dave Freece, the Executive Director, did have a piece of advice about the future of community history museums. CCHM prides itself in learning from their community instead of the other way around. In order to truly be a public institution and to remain relevant in today’s society, cultural organizations, and especially community history museums, need to listen to their constituents and the people that they serve.



Cowlitz County Historical Museum	
City	Kelso
Attendance	12,000 (est.)
Annual Income 2008	\$194,607
Total Square Footage	10,000
Exhibition Square Footage	4,000
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	2
Adult Admissions	\$0
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	126
Miles from Renton	119
Household Population	101,254
Median Family Income	36,784



Highline Historical Society

Date of Interview: December 7, 2009
Interviewee: Cyndi Upthegrove, Executive Director
Interviewer: Lauren Merker, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile
The Highline Historical Society (HHS) is a unique organization that manages to be programmatically active and engaged with the community without having a building to house their locally significant collections or operations. Though HHS has only one paid staff member (a part-time professional curator), the dedication of their crew of 60 volunteers and the support of their 500 members drives the mission of the Society and allows them to serve the diverse population of the Highline region.

HHS is currently in the midst of a large capital campaign that will drive the conceptualization and the creation of the Highline Heritage Museum. Director Cyndi Upthegrove told us that this exciting development will create a permanent home for the Society’s collections and archives and will make it possible to house permanent and traveling exhibits, encourage new acquisitions, and expand their programming, thereby making the Society a cornerstone institution within Highline. While the capital campaign timeline is indefinable at this point, there is considerable energy and community support driving this project.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

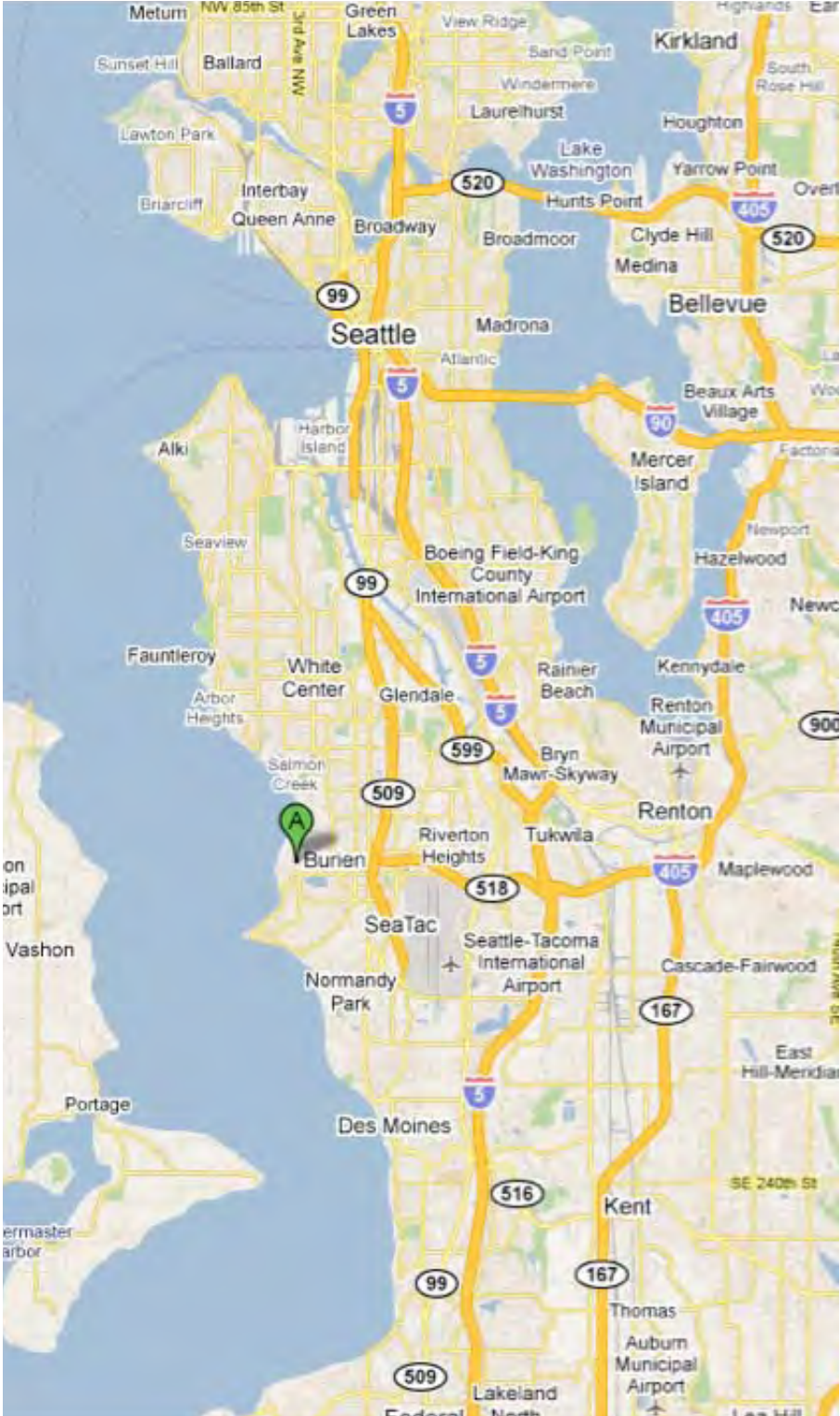
HHS is not comparable to the Renton History Museum in many ways, namely the Society’s lack of a building. However, even with this handicap, HHS is a model organization that succeeds at “collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting the history of the Highline region.” One area in which they do exceptionally well is their commitment to serving the region’s majority minority—the Latino population.

HHS has realized that the local Latino population not only makes up a large portion of their community, but is also significantly underserved. With the impetus of hiring their curator, much of HHS’s programming has shifted towards serving the Latino population through targeted after-school programs, an oral history project which gives community members a voice with which to express their own history, the popular Day of the Dead celebration, and much more. HHS is a prime example of an organization that has assessed their community, discovered real need within that community, is addressing those needs, and has thereby become a deep-rooted community resource.



The proposed Highline Heritage Museum.

Highline County Historical Society	
City	Burien
Attendance	n/a
Annual Income 2008	\$314,624
Exhibition Square Footage	n/a
Paid Full-time	0
Paid Part-time	0
Adult Admissions	n/a
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	15
Miles from Renton	8
Household Population	31,881
Median Family Income	\$53,814



2.0 MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Jefferson County Historical Society

Date of Interview: December 2, 2009
Interviewee: William Tennent, Executive Director
Interviewer: Chuck Howarth and Lauren Merker, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile
The Jefferson County Historical Society (JCHS) is a large, multi-complex facility located on the northeastern tip of the Olympic Peninsula in the historic Victorian seaport town of Port Townsend. The Museum enjoys many of the benefits of residing in a tourist destination, namely a large annual attendance of an estimated 40,000 visitors. Because of this large, admission-paying visitorship, in addition to high gift shop sales, a large and dedicated membership, local government support, and popular special events and programs, JCHS is a financially healthy institution that can continue to fulfill its role as a coveted resource for people interested in late 1800s historic preservation.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

The Jefferson County Historical Society is successful in part because they make a concerted effort to keep current and relevant to the visitors to the region. Their programs and special events are innovative and truly cater to the interests of the people visiting Port Townsend. For example, since many people come to the town to experience the thriving art scene, JCHS tries to capitalize on this interest through exhibits that are more arts-based (e.g. Superman and American Comics) and by tying into the town’s monthly Art Walk.

While travel to and around the United States decreased by approximately 6% in 2009, Jefferson County seems to be experiencing a small increase in tourism. William Tennent, the Executive Director of JCHS, estimates that tourism is up approximately 5% on the peninsula. He attributes this increase to the popularity of “staycations” which is the idea that in order to save money, people are taking shorter and more proximate trips. This type of travel has become more popular during times of economic hardship. While Renton has not historically been a tourist destination, it may benefit the Museum to capitalize on the regional tourism market.



Firehall Exhibit www.jchsmuseum.org

Jefferson County Historical Society	
City	Port Townsend
Attendance	40,000
Annual Income 2008	\$595,017
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	6
Adult Admissions	\$4
Exhibition Square Footage	6,000
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	56
Miles from Renton	74
Household Population	8,300
Median Family Income	43,500



Shoreline Historical Museum

Date of Interview: December 2, 2009
Interviewee: Vicki Stiles, Executive Director
Interviewer: Chuck Howarth and Lauren Merker, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile

The Shoreline Historical Museum is a small community history museum located in Shoreline, Washington. The Museum “preserves, records, and interprets the history of Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and North Seattle.” While the Museum executes their mission successfully by showcasing their collection in 5,000 square feet of exhibition space and maintaining a thorough archive for research purposes, they are also a valued community space. Their large multipurpose room is utilized frequently by local community groups (the Northwest Basketry Guild, the Watch and Clock Association, and numerous others), many of which the Museum considers partners. Community members who use this room make up approximately 15-20% of the total attendance for the year.

The Shoreline Historical Museum considers it imperative to their mission to remain a free organization for whomever would like to walk through their doors, including school groups. Their free admission further reinforces their strength as a community cornerstone institution. While they do not make any money from admissions, they do receive approximately half of their income from the City of Shoreline. The other half is from donations and grants. Their current business model allows them to retain one paid, full-time director and one part-time collections manager, in addition to a handful of docents.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

The Shoreline Historical Museum is comparable to and a model for the Renton History Museum in a few key ways. The similarities lie in their size and scope, and as history museums that generally serve the community in which they reside. Shoreline excels as a small museum in their high attendance numbers, which is estimated to be double Renton’s. The Museum’s success in becoming a valued and heavily utilized community space has increasingly contributed to their attendance numbers and allowed them to become a relevant institution in the community.

Another interesting aspect about the Shoreline Historical Museum is that they claim to attract a substantial number of families and school groups—a segment that is traditionally challenging for small history centers to reach. Shoreline places a great deal of value in bringing in young visitors which is exemplified by their hands-on activities within the museum, as well as their frequent special events geared to-



Shoreline's Ronald School, Wikimedia Commons

wards this population. In order for the Renton History Museum to remain relevant to a greater spectrum of the population and to guarantee their permanence as a community institution, they should make consistent and concerted efforts to bring in young people into the Museum.

Shoreline Historic Museum	
City	Shoreline
Attendance	8-10,000 (est.)
Annual Income 2007	\$86,353
Total Square Footage	16,000 (est.)
Exhibition Square Footage	5,000 (est.)
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	1
Adult Admissions	\$0
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	12
Miles from Renton	23
Household Population	543,000
Median Family Income	\$56,300



2.0 MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

White River Valley Museum

Date of Interview: July 9, 2009
Interviewee: Patricia Cosgrove, Director
Interviewer: Maeryta Medrano, Gyroscope Inc.

Profile
The White River Valley Museum (WRVM) was built in 1970 as a 5,000 square foot museum and was expanded to 10,000 square feet in 1998. Along with the renovation came a re-visioning of the museum and its programs, outreach efforts, and exhibitions. One of their main changes was their new focus on the K-3 audience. They consistently meet with teachers and students to make sure the Museum’s programs coincide with school curriculum standards and directly engage with this audience in order to shape exhibits, programs and resources offered.

WRVM is able to attract approximately 15,000 visitors a year, which includes 5,000 school children that come through the space annually. WRVM has an annual budget of \$252,945. In addition to their admission revenue, the Museum receives the majority of their income from government support.

Implications for the Renton History Museum

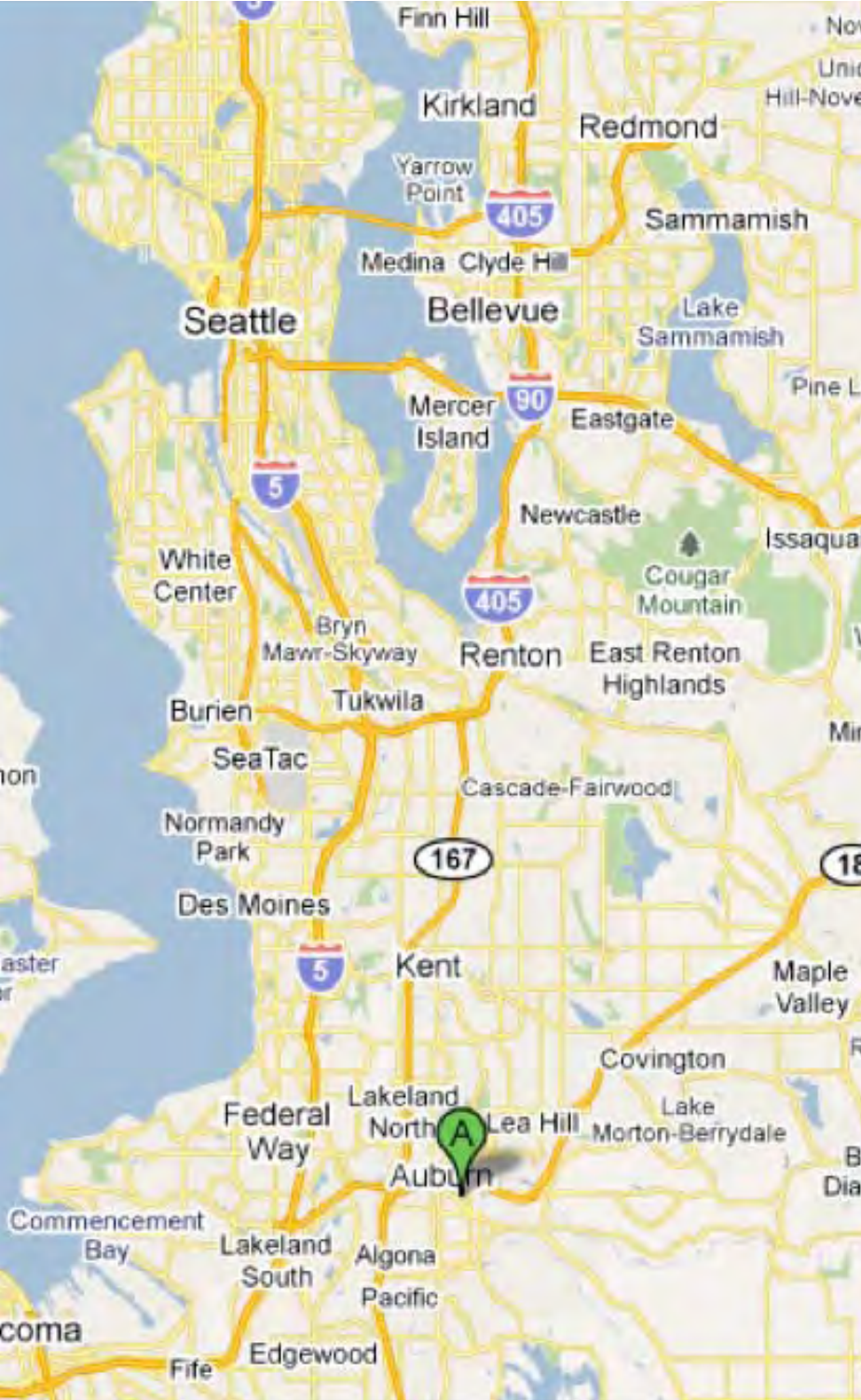
WRVM seems to focus on serving a younger audience. As mentioned above, when the Museum went through a re-visioning process ten years ago, they began to directly consult with teachers, students and other young audiences in order to influence their exhibitions and programs. They have a specific process that allows grade school children to visit the museum several times, study the collections, research materials, and then develop activities for young people. Patricia Cosgrove said “I had a group of girls interested in the fashion exhibit. We looked through the Sears catalogs, tried on corsets, discussed how fashion relates to society, and looked at the messages that our fashion selections say”. This valuable input then directly influenced the programs and activities that support an exhibition on women’s undergarments.

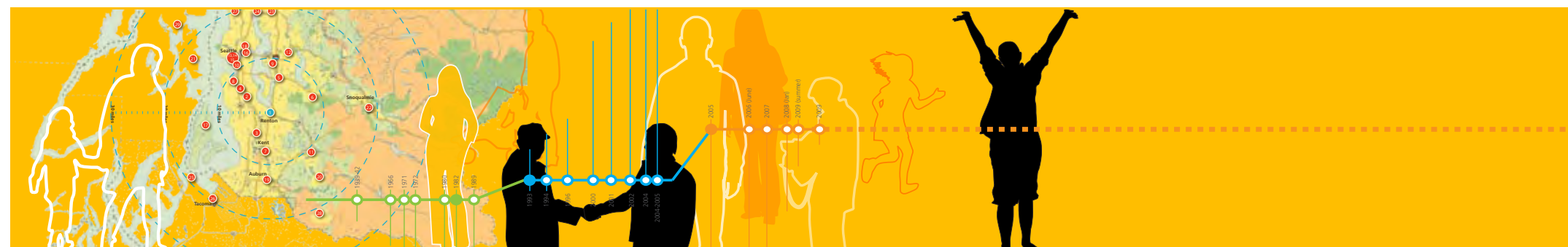
WRVM also sees major value for their museum in temporary exhibits. They see temporary exhibits as a way to cultivate “new money and new audiences” and in fact they attribute large spikes in attendance to these changing exhibitions. Temporary or traveling exhibits can be a huge drain on a museum’s resources. However, WRVM considers the benefits of hosting a number of temporary exhibits to far surpass the costs.



Auburn Public Market Exhibit www.wrvmuseum.org

White River Valley Museum	
City	Auburn
Attendance	15,000
Annual Income 2007	\$252,945
Total Square Footage	10,000
Exhibition Square Footage	4,500
Paid Full-time	1
Paid Part-time	6
Adult Admissions	\$2
Governance	Public
Miles from Seattle	30
Miles from Renton	16
Household Population	40,314
Median Family Income	\$45,426





SECTION 3

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Vision

The Renton History Museum’s new strategic direction is the Experimental History Project (EHP), a dynamic series of changing installations and other programs that experiment with historical interpretation and community service. For the Museum, this direction offers multiple opportunities for growth in attendance, audience diversity, institutional capacity, and community support. For Renton, it offers new opportunities to connect the City’s past to its future and to strengthen the fabric of a community that has experienced very rapid growth in both territory and cultural diversity.

A Changing Museum For a Changing Renton

At its core, EHP is about consciously and repeatedly revisiting key questions and assumptions about history-making: What themes, events, topics and stories are of historical importance? To whom? How are these to be interpreted and represented in the present? Whose voices and perspectives should be included? Who gets to decide?

By sampling multiple answers to these questions through a continually changing set of exhibitions, RHM hopes to create not only a more exciting public program, but one that is much more responsive to community needs. EHP is above all a framework for continuously exploring how Renton’s past and present can come together in ways that offer real value to the residents of the City.

EHP leaves behind the model of museum-as-authority and invites the Museum’s public to participate in an ongoing conversation about making and understanding history. It is an approach that takes strategic risks to involve new audiences in the excitement of asking and answering historical questions.

At present, RHM centers on the stories of “Old” Renton: the pioneer families that founded the City, the succession of industries that shaped its economic trajectory, the wars and other global events that buffeted its course. These are worthy themes and will remain so under EHP, but they are not sufficient for a city that now boasts eighty-seven languages, rapidly expanding territory and more than double the population of just a few years before. This new Renton needs a history museum in which all of Renton’s citizens can see themselves and their stories—a place where everyone’s history has a home.

How the past matters in the present is much more than as a catalog of positive and negative examples—good and bad lessons to be learned. An ongoing and public effort to make sense of Renton’s history in relation to its ever-changing present concerns and future directions is an opportunity for civic conversation, shared meaning-making, and the kind of community-building that is crucial to a rapidly growing place like Renton. RHM’s new direction positions the Museum at the center of that effort and offers exciting possibilities for it to serve both as a catalyst and a forum for community dialogue.

Over time, EHP’s experiments could take many directions. Some might involve revisiting old stories from new angles by mixing history with art or science. For example, the Museum could put out a call for proposals to local and national artists for work related to the City’s coal mining or industrial past. Engineers, geologists, and other scientists might be included to provide other perspectives, as well as augmenting installations with the Museum’s collections as appropriate.

Another option might involve taking on unconventional topics such as Renton’s history of UFO sightings as an unusual perspective on the City’s aviation history: first-person interviews, newspaper articles, and photos could be solicited from well-respected local pilots to tell this story in their own words.

Other experiments might involve more direct community participation such as a large-scale oral history project conducted by school children, a collection of house histories by their current owners, or a cell phone tour of Renton historical sites that includes content produced by residents themselves.



Collecting visitor’s stories



Renton UFOs

Regardless of the media and techniques employed, RHM would favor themes and topics with strong links to contemporary issues and strong potential or appeal across generational and cultural boundaries. An example might be a project that probes the theme of immigration or pioneering from Renton’s earliest days to the present in ways that knit together the stories of the City’s founding families with those of its most recent arrivals. Other projects might examine the experience of Renton and Rentonites during times of war, epidemic, or economic crisis.

“Root stories in local communities and local history, but. . .draw out themes that relate to visitors no matter where they are coming from.”

EHP Benefits and Opportunitites

Increased program capacity

Switching from a relatively static program of permanent exhibitions to a series of temporary installations offers a chance to multiply the Museum’s programming capacity within its existing space and without major new capital expenses. RHM can move in this direction quickly and with relatively little up-front cost.

Audience growth

Along with new program opportunities come new opportunities to attract and engage audiences including those that do not now view RHM as relevant to their needs. One of the criteria for selecting a new EHP project might be whether or not it has the capacity to attract new users to RHM. An equally important consideration is developing strategies to bring existing audiences along as the Museum implements this new vision.

Responsiveness

As a truly experimental framework for both program and community service, EHP is inherently flexible and it will demand similar flexibility from RHM staff, Board, and stakeholders. Although adopting this direction may pose some growing pains, it will leave the organization more nimble and responsive to community needs and to the challenges of staying relevant in a rapidly changing community and world.

A model for the museum field

This new direction for RHM is novel within the field of regional and community history museums. While that novelty makes it more challenging to find directly comparable models for EHP, it also offers RHM a competitive platform for seeking new support from foundations and other agencies beyond the Renton area.

A catalyst and a forum for the community

Within EHP the Museum hopes to offer more timely and provocative programs with the intention of stimulating and facilitating community conversation. This is a significant opportunity for the Museum and for Renton.

“I’m more interested in programs and events than in permanent exhibits. Programming changes and there are new activities and new information that draw me to continue coming back.”

EHP Challenges

Changing perceptions

RHM currently is not seen as relevant or attractive to many of Renton’s residents. Changing those perceptions, especially among the City’s younger population and immigrant communities, is a significant additional challenge beyond implementing the EHP direction.

Program funding

The rate of program change proposed for EHP will require a continuous stream of program funding. Some of this may come from redirecting current expenditures, but it will also require identification of new funding sources and the effort, skills, and relationships necessary to cultivate them.

Staffing

RHM’s current staffing of 2.0 FTEs and 2.0 PTEs is about average for local history museums of its size, but may not be enough to manage the rate of program change proposed for EHP. RHM may need at least one additional paid staff and greater use of interns and volunteers in order to handle the demands of operating EHP.

Marketing and PR

The increased rate of program change made possible by the EHP framework comes with the need to effectively communicate each new offering to the Museum’s current and potential users. This may be an area where in-kind support from local professionals or paid consultants will be needed.

Community Relations

RHM hopes to use EHP as a platform for engaging Renton communities that are not currently involved with the Museum or with other public institutions. Developing relationships with those communities will take time and investment of energy and attention.

Key Strategies

Experiment

EHP is a framework for continuous change in all aspects of the Museum’s operations. Although this may seem risky, it is actually the surest path for RHM to remain relevant and responsive to its community over time. Individual EHP projects may fare better or worse, but as a well-thought-out multi-year series they will allow RHM to adapt and grow in ways that a more static approach could never match. EHP may ensure that a wholesale re-working of museum operations will not be necessary again in the future.

Target new constituencies

A continuously changing program also will allow RHM to broaden its base by choosing projects to target new audiences and acquire new stakeholders. The challenge, of course, is to bring along existing supporters while acquiring new ones, but that is a better problem to have than to be lacking the means or prospects for growth. A related concern is the need to incorporate these new constituencies into the board and staff of the organization.

Share control

Along with partnerships and a broader community focus comes the need to share control of RHM’s program. This may take many forms ranging from guest curators and invited artists to visitor-contributed content and online dialogue. RHM’s new direction may at times require the Museum to step back into the role of facilitator rather than direct presenter. An improved Web site will be needed to accomplish that goal.

Accumulate assets through projects

Working in a series of temporary projects puts a premium on remembering what is learned along the way and saving assets of long-term value to the organization and the community. These might range broadly from reusable furniture and equipment to archives of visitor-contributed content to institutional assets like new community partnerships or collaboration processes.

Partner for what you need

To achieve the capacity that EHP requires, RHM will need strong partnerships with individuals and organizations throughout Renton and the surrounding area. The products of these relationships might include skilled personnel such as guest curators or professional consultants, access to other collections, alternative program venues, and both direct funding and in-kind support.

Use collections as a flexible resource

The Museum’s collections will remain an important asset, but they will be used differently than before. Long-term display of a relatively small portion of the collection will give way to a continuous sampling of the collections as required by the various projects; Web-based exhibits may also showcase collections. The broader content scope of the new direction may also lead to more short-term borrowing of objects not in the RHM collections, both from other museums and from Renton residents.

Acquire flexible infrastructure

To implement EHP, the Museum will de-install all of its current permanent exhibits and transform its exhibition space into a flexible temporary gallery. In addition to some relatively minor architectural modifications, this will require reusable assets such as movable wall and lighting systems, audiovisual equipment, and display furniture. To the extent possible, these assets should be acquired up front, using capital funds to reduce the cost of projects later on.

Use the Web to connect

The Museum’s communication needs will increase greatly with EHP. Gyroscope recommends that RHM strengthen its online presence and use it to support dialogue with and among the new and old audiences it needs to engage.



Renton Film Festival - Finger of God webisodes

Donkey Park Productions

Audiences

“RHM . . . needs to engage more with local communities. It also needs to address the generational shift [and] tap into a younger audience . . . although it’s obvious, the broader the audience, the broader the funding opportunities.”

Although Renton has grown in area, population, and cultural diversity, the Museum’s membership and volunteer base has diminished in recent years. RHM’s existing attendance of just under 4,000 visitors, although not atypical, is lower than that of some comparable institutions in the region, indicating real potential for growth in visitor numbers. RHM visitors tend to be older and less diverse than Renton’s general population. RHM hopes to retain its current users through the transition and honor their contributions, but it also needs to grow and diversify that audience significantly. The following audience segments are of particular interest in that effort:

Immigrant communities

With eighty-seven languages in its public schools and twenty percent of its population learning English, Renton is clearly much more diverse than it used to be. One of the criteria for selecting EHP projects should be the inclusion of themes and approaches for engaging these new residents and for weaving their histories into the fabric of Renton’s past. RHM’s recent successes with the *“Key Ingredients”* and the ESL exhibitions are examples of projects that successfully attracted participation and visitation from this audience.

New Arrivals

Renton has also grown significantly through annexation and relocation in recent years. EHP projects that link the experiences of those new residents with those of older Rentonites will be a priority for RHM. In this way the Museum might serve to include these new residents into Renton’s civic life more fully.

Young adults

RHM faces two challenges with this segment: the perception that the current program lacks relevance for younger audiences and the fact that in general this age group does not use museums heavily. EHP’s support for more rapid program change, connections to contemporary issues, and the inclusion of art and artists should provide good opportunities to reach out to this audience. Other proposed changes such as adding evening hours, targeted events, and a small cafe may help as well to attract this group. Building on the Museum’s experiments with social media and incorporating more exciting use of technology may also appeal to this audience.

“The different generations are almost invisible to each other.”

Seniors

RHM’s current audience includes many seniors who are long-time Renton residents. Going forward, the Museum’s challenge with this segment is connecting it with the new audiences that RHM hopes to attract. One strategy for doing this may be the inclusion of specifically intergenerational projects that actively involve Rentonites of different ages.

Families with Children

RHM is not now a destination for younger visitors, and history museums in general do not attract younger audiences, but the flexibility of EHP would allow for some specific projects to be aimed more toward families with children. These might be community-based projects scheduled for the summer months when there is relatively more time for families to do things together. Other possibilities for reaching out to this audience include targeted classes, camps and other events.

Schools

Up until a few years ago, RHM was a field trip destination for Renton’s third graders, but cuts in field trip funding and changes in curricular priorities have led to discontinuation of these visits. EHP’s flexibility would help RHM better make the case for its programs’ relevance, although the funding problem may not be within the Museum’s capacity to resolve.

Teens

This is another segment that is notoriously difficult for museums to attract. Successful efforts with this group have tended to involve them as junior staff and volunteers rather than as visitors and have recognized their intense need for peer interaction. EHP’s focus on community-created content could include projects that position teens as program and content developers. Another possibility is to recruit teens for docents or other volunteer positions, perhaps as part of an after school club that offers opportunities for learning new skills as well as socializing.

Home schoolers

This is a niche audience, but one with serious potential for repeat visitation. Some museums have seen nearly daily use of exhibits by home-school teachers and students when the program had relevance to their curriculum. Email marketing to this group on a project-by-project basis may be worth the effort.

Researchers

This is a small component of RHM’s current audience and will likely remain so, but RHM might look for ways to develop more public programs around the activities and interests of professional and student researchers, perhaps as a condition for access to the collection.

Enthusiast groups

Another set of repeat users might be found among groups of amateur historians and hobbyists with a history bent, such as car collectors or architectural preservationists. Offering RHM as a meeting space for those groups in exchange for programming classes and public events may be beneficial for both parties.



SECTION 4
PUBLIC
PROGRAM

Program Types

For the transition to EHP, Gyroscope is recommending four major types of exhibitions, each requiring a somewhat different implementation approach. Other types of projects as well as variations on these will likely emerge as RHM implements the Master Plan. Important considerations in deciding each theme or installation are delineated in the strategic matrix. This chart can be used as a tool during future program planning and exhibition development.

Type 1: Artists On History
(September – January)

This approach invites artists to explore history with the intention of uncovering new perspectives on past events and their meaning in the present. It would use a technique more common in art galleries and competitions than museums: a call for proposals around a theme developed by RHM staff or a designated curator. The curator or curatorial team would then select one or more proposed works from the submitted proposals for installation in the gallery. Depending on the theme and the quality of proposals, the Museum might choose to augment the submissions with work from other invited artists, the Museum’s collection, or other local collectors. This type of installation would work well in the fall when the yearly calendar of arts and culture seasons typically begins.

Each summer, a request for proposals (RFP) would be sent out to Renton-area and perhaps even national artists explaining the theme. Each installation of this type would be mounted in the large exhibition space for four months.

Each of the following exhibition examples serves to link “old” Renton and the collections of the Museum with Renton today and the current Renton community. As we cannot anticipate which artists will respond or what their response will be, the installations described below are examples of artists currently creating work with museums and galleries.

The budget for each exhibition would range from \$5,000-\$10,000 depending on the complexity and expense of the installation, and travel/housing costs for the artist. 4Culture, Renton Municipal Arts Commission, Allied Arts of Renton, and the Piazza Foundation would be potential partners and/or funders for all these.

Strategic Matrix for EHP Program Planning

		EHP Key Strategies:										General Strategies:									
		Experimental	Reaches New and Diverse Audiences	Sharing Control	Accumulating Assets (Content, furniture, partnerships, etc.)	Strategic Partner Identified	Using Collections as a Resource	Acquiring Flexible Infrastructure	Using the Web to Connect	Current Content	Generates Buzz	Identified Funding Opportunity		Fits with Mission	Fits with Vision	Develops Inclusive Learning Styles	Opportunities for Visitor Contribution	Intergenerational	Associated External Program or Event	Supports Curriculum	Sustainable (Socially and Environmentally)
TyPOLOGY	SAMPLE INSTALLATIONS																				
Artist Installations																					
	When Coal Was King																				
	Between Two Rivers																				
	Victory Gardens																				
	Renton Senses																				
Traveling Exhibitions (Rented)																					
	Key Ingredients																				
	Quilts of Gee's Bend																				
	Combat Paper Project																				
	Journey Stories																				
	Coffee: The World in your Cup																				
	Ladies of Lincoln's Era																				
	The Big One																				
	Race																				
Student Installations (UW/Renton HS)																					
	Conservation Lab																				
	RHS Centennial																				
	Thesis Project																				
Community Installations																					
	Kids in Charge																				
	Around the Globe																				
	Renton Portraits																				
	Who Is a Renton Pioneer?																				

Type 1: Artists On History

Theme 1: When Coal Was King

Approach:
Serves to link historic Renton with the new; provides an opportunity to showcase green initiatives in the community.

Description:
Displays from artists featuring art made with coal or an artist response to the current use of coal in the United States. The exhibition could be augmented with elements from Renton’s collection of photos or artifacts related to the importance of coal to the Renton community in the past. Information about green energy efforts in Renton would also be highlighted.

Suggested Funders:
Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington Manufacturing Services (both support environmental initiatives in the Seattle area).

Artist Example: Charles Edgar Patience
African-American artist who carved exquisite works out of anthracite coal.



Artist Example: Chris Jordan, photographer
Artist Chris Jordan is known for his creative representation of American consumption habits and was shocked to find out the numbers involved in producing coal-fired electricity. After learning about mountaintop removal mining in the Appalachian range, Jordan decided to illustrate how much coal we consume each day.

Mr. Jordan produces video and photography illustrating America’s consumption habits.



Video can be seen at: <http://www.grist.org/article/2009-08-05-audio-slideshow-artist-chris-jordan-on-americas-coal-consumption>

Artist Example: Mathew Conford and David Cross
Conford and Cross installed fifteen tons of coal in an art gallery in Wolverhampton, England to get visitors thinking about the region’s contribution to industrial history and about future energy needs.



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1086744/Pictured-Old-king-coal-artistic-old-soul.html#>

Type 1: Artists On History

Theme 2: Between Two Rivers

Approach:
Takes advantage of the Museum’s proximity to the Cedar River to explore the significance of rivers throughout Renton’s heritage. Potential for bringing in environmental science, flood mitigation, and salmon study.

Description:
Renton was located at the junction of the Black and Cedar Rivers because of their utility at moving goods to market. The exhibition includes images of the rivers in the past, old maps, photographs as well as current documentation from the status today. Digital animation might explore the process by which the Black River disappeared, and where it used to flow. An artist-rendered map of the area could be posted with scientific information regarding monitoring of the river—this would be interactive or completed with multi-media through computer programs with touch screens. Visitors will be invited to post notes on the map to include stories of why and how the rivers have changed over time. Live Web cameras mounted at the Library and other stations along the river can be monitored at RHM.

Suggested Funders:
IKEA (funder of Renton River Days), King County Environmental Programs, King County Environmental District, REI.

Suggested Partners:
Friends of the Cedar River Watershed, <http://www.cedarriver.org/>, Renton Public Library



BEAUTY SWIM SKINS, by LisaNa Red Bear, South Puget Sound, Olympia, WA

creative commons: dreamsjung



Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), Brooklyn, NY, The Art Gallery of Knoxville

creative commons: AGoK



Caravanserai! Dance Performance at River Sculpture Festival (<http://www.riversculpture.com/>)

creative commons: moqmismo



<http://green.kingcounty.gov/rivergagedata/images/cedar-river-gage-map.jpg>

Memory Maps Exhibition, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, 2001 developed by Local Projects in New York. clairelight.typepad.com/atlast/literature/page/2/

River of Words:



Swimming in the Sea
Zachary Tomlinson
Age 8



Swan
2009 International Grand Prize Winner
Age 13

4.0 PUBLIC PROGRAM

Type 1: Artists On History

Theme 3: Victory Gardens

Approach:
Links popular Victory Gardens in Renton during World War II with community gardening, home/kitchen gardens, and organic farming in and near Renton today. Well-known garden efforts, such as the new White House kitchen garden could also be included.

Description:
Local landscape architects and gardeners could create a display of what a victory garden now and in the future will be. Visitors could contribute photos of their own gardens and/or post them on the Museum’s Web site. An information area contains resources to assist visitors with starting their own garden projects.

Suggested Funders:
Urban Garden Solutions, Renton; McLendon Hardware; Washington State Department of Agriculture, Home Depot (2 Renton Area garden centers).

Artist Example: Joe Wirtheim, Portland Oregon
Mr. Wirtheim has created a poster campaign for new, American “home front” values with 21st century messages inspired by the sustainability movement. The artwork is a series of propaganda-style poster images that are either hand screen-printed, painted or printed.



Victory Garden of Tomorrow
Website: <http://www.victorygardenoftomorrow.com/about.html>

Other potential artist: Amy Franceschini
Ms. Franceschini is a San Francisco-based artist who has created a Victory Gardens project that has been on display at SFMOMA. Included in the exhibition were a prototype rainwater harvester and documentation of items used to plan and implement trail gardens. At SFMOMA, she was part of the SECA Art Award, which showcased related sculptures including hybrids like a “bikebarrow” and “pogoshovel.”



Images from SFMOMA Exhibit: Victory Gardens 2007

Theme 4: Renton Senses

Approach:
In this exhibition based on “Dans le Noir” projects across the world, the gallery space would be explored in the dark. Visitors would have the opportunity to explore the gallery space and artifacts through senses other than sight.

Description:
An artist, working with the Museum’s staff, would select items for the installation. In a completely dark gallery, objects that can be handled could be put out for exploration. Hearing tubes could access oral histories. The artists selected could augment the exhibition with sensory experiences related to Renton today, such as a smell area that visitors could try to identify. This exhibition would have particular appeal to the visually impaired and might be created in partnership with the Washington Council of the Blind. [Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens www.exhibitfiles.org/plants_are_up_to_something]

Artist Examples:



Plants are Up to Something Exhibition



Plants are Up to Something Exhibition, La Villette, Paris



Dans Le Noir Cafe, London

Dans Le Noir, a London café that serves food and drink in the dark to give customers a sightless experience that encourages both empathy for the blind and a new understanding of how the senses relate.

Suggested Funders/Partners:
Washington State Department of Services for the Blind, <http://www.dsb.wa.gov/>; Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted, <http://www.csbps.com/>; United Way.

4.0 PUBLIC PROGRAM

Type 2: Traveling Exhibitions

(January – April)

Not all of the programs in this new model will be created by RHM or its local partners. As it did with the recent Smithsonian traveling exhibition, *Key Ingredients: America By Food*, RHM will look to other producers for some of the exhibitions it needs. In most cases, these exhibitions would be rented from the developing institutions and would need to be booked in advance on a schedule determined by the originating organization. Because these exhibitions will tend to lack direct local connections, RHM may need to augment them with content, collections, and special events.

Exhibition 1: *Key Ingredients, America by Food*

Originating Institution: Smithsonian SITES program

Description:
Exhibited at the Renton History Museum in spring 2009, *Key Ingredients: America by Food* explores the connections between Americans and the foods they produce, prepare, preserve, and present at the table—a provocative and thoughtful look at the historical, regional, and social traditions that merge in everyday meals and celebrations. Through a selection of artifacts, photographs, and illustrations, *Key Ingredients* examines the evolution of the American kitchen and how food industries have responded to the technological innovations that have enabled Americans to choose an ever-wider variety of frozen, prepared, and fresh foods. *Key Ingredients* also looks beyond the home to restaurants, diners, and celebrations that help build a sense of community through food. *Key Ingredients* doubled the Museum’s typical visitor numbers during its run, and provided the impetus for numerous partnerships and a downtown restaurant walk.

Rental Fee: \$2,000 plus shipping and installation/de-installation expenses
Size: Minimum of 1,000 square feet and 9 foot ceilings.
Suggested Sponsors: Humanities Washington, <http://www.humanities.org/grants/>



RHM Facebook



Installation and enhancement of *Key Ingredients* at RHM

Exhibition 2: *Combat Paper Project*



combatpaper.org



Originating Institution: Green Door Studios, Burlington, VT

Approach: The *Combat Paper Project* is a traveling collaborative project out of Burlington, VT that involves artists and veterans in papermaking and printmaking workshops, creative writing, exhibits, demonstrations, and artists’ talks. Veterans in the community can participate in the creation of art about their military service, and visitors have the chance to engage these men and women in dialogue.

Description:
By hosting the *Combat Paper Project*, RHM could offer local servicemen and women a creative outlet for the expression of their experiences. Veterans might make paper and prints right in the exhibit gallery, and then exhibit their work. Visitors could observe and interact with vets. This exhibit would appeal to Renton residents interested in using visual arts as a springboard to explore current issues. The Museum’s proximity to the Veteran’s Monument provides an opportunity for a larger dialogue about vets’ role in the City’s history.

Suggested Funders/Partners: local VFW chapter, Boeing Co., PACCAR, Renton Municipal Arts Commission, Allied Arts of Renton, 4Culture

4.0 PUBLIC PROGRAM

Type 2: Traveling Exhibitions

Exhibition 3: *Quilts of Gee's Bend*



Gee's Bend Quilt, ohizajane.blogspot.com



photo: Steve Pitkin

Originating Institution: The Quilts of Gee's Bend: Quilters Collective History

Description: This collection of quilts from an isolated African-American community in Alabama were created with very few resources and in striking patterns. The quilts were part of community quilting bees that involved singing and storytelling. This collection is augmented by photos, video and audio documenting the story of the quilters and their community.

Rental Fee: TBD

Size: 2,000-3,000 square feet

Suggested Sponsors: ATT – sponsor Quilters Collaborative



The exhibition could be augmented with work by Brielle Creaser, an 11-year old Renton artist who enjoys creating art projects in all mediums and is known for her origami quilts. She learned how to make two-dimensional origami squares in the fourth grade. Recently, she has been nominated to represent her school at the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, DC. The conference

provides opportunities for exceptional students from across the country to learn about leadership and social advocacy in order to make a positive impact in their communities. She has displayed at the Carco Theatre as a way to provide exposure to her unique style of quilting.

Exhibition 4: *Journey Stories*



Originating Institution: Smithsonian SITES, Museum on Main Street Exhibition Series

Description: *Journey Stories*—tales of how we and our ancestors came to America, a central element of our personal heritage. Our history is filled with stories of people leaving behind everything—families and possessions—to reach a new life in another state, across the continent, or even across an ocean.

Journey Stories will examine the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to feel free to move. The story is diverse and focused on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom. Accounts of immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country; stories of individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, their own homestead, or employment; the harrowing journeys of Africans and Native Americans forced to move; and, of course, fun and frolic on the open road.

Renton's transportation history is more than planes, trains, boats, buses, cars, wagons, and trucks. The development of transportation manufacture and technology by companies like Boeing, PACCAR, and Kenworth was largely inspired by the human drive for freedom. To be exhibited at the Renton History Museum in fall 2011.

Rental Fee: \$2,000 plus shipping and installation/de-installation expenses

Size: 1,000-1,500 square feet

Suggested Sponsors: Humanities Washington, <http://www.humanities.org/grants/>

Suggested Funders / Partners: Boeing Co, PACCAR, Kenworth

<http://www.museumonmainstreet.org/journeystories/index.htm>

Exhibition 5: *Coffee: The World in Your Cup*



Originating Institution: Burke Museum, Seattle

Description: Coffee is one of the world's most widely traded commodities, and has had a tremendous impact not only on the local economy and character of the Pacific Northwest, but also on cultures, economies, and environments across the globe. *Coffee: The World in Your Cup* uses photos, maps, texts, selected artifacts, audiovisual presentations, and hands-on demonstrations to explore the fascinating world behind the coffee we drink. The exhibition could be supplemented by collection material and objects loaned by local coffee companies.

Rental Fee: \$8,500 US for a 12-week booking period plus in-bound shipping

Size: 2,000 Square Feet

Suggested Sponsors: Starbucks, other local coffee companies.

Suggested Partners: The Met, Liberty Café, Jet City

http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/booknow/traveling_coffee.php

Type 2: Traveling Exhibits

Exhibition 6: Ladies of Lincoln's Era



Originating Institution: California Exhibition Resource Alliance (CERA)

Description:
Look beyond the bonnet with the *Ladies of Lincoln's Era* traveling exhibition. Rejoice in 12 stories of mischief-making, trend-setting and pistol-wielding gals who made a difference in American history. During their time, these ladies faced unprecedented challenges as abolitionists, spies, humanitarians, and agents of change. They embody independence, wit, charm, intelligence, and determination: characteristics required to brave an uncertain world.

From the feminine wiles of “Wild” Rose Greenhow to the first, First Lady of California, Jessie Benton Fremont, these unconventional women are still being talked about 200 years later. Other women featured in the exhibition include Harriet Tubman, “conductor” of the Underground Railroad; Clara Barton, who established the American Red Cross; and Sojourner Truth, abolitionist, women’s rights advocate.

The exhibit encourages visitors, especially students and children, to see history written through the lives of real people who made a difference on our own lives today.

This exhibition could be supplemented with a Renton focus: residents could submit photos of women who have been inspiring to them along with a short description of why. These could be displayed along with relevant collections from RHM and/or added to the Museum’s Web site.

Rental Fee: \$500 for an 8-week booking period plus shipping
Size: 1,000 s.f., includes 14 text panels, education and marketing materials
Suggested Sponsors: Humanities Washington
Suggested Funders / Partners: Soroptimists of Renton

<http://www.ceraexhibits.org/exhibits/history/ladiesoflincoln/index.htm>

Exhibition 7: The Big One: Earthquakes in the Pacific Northwest



Originating Institution: Burke Museum, Seattle

Description: *The Big One: Earthquakes in the Pacific Northwest* addresses key questions that every local resident should know—Why are earthquakes inevitable here? What hazards do they present? What can we do to prepare? Visitors will learn about the geological processes that cause Northwest earthquakes, the ways earthquakes are detected and measured, the hazards they present, and steps we can all take to make our homes and families safer. There are also examples of intriguing earthquake research, including the fascinating scientific detective story that proved that major earthquakes—The Big One—really do happen here. Exhibition could be supplemented with photos and artifacts related to past earthquakes in Renton and/or recent events, i.e. Haiti.

Rental Fee: \$1,200 for an 8-week booking period; \$75 for each additional week. Includes insurance, shipping, publicity materials and hand-outs.

Size: 20 running feet or 100 square feet depending on arrangement of panels, 9-foot ceilings, power drop, PC with monitor.

Potential Sponsors: Major support for the exhibition was provided by State Farm Insurance Companies, the National Science Foundation, Washington Sea Grant, The Boeing Company, and the University of Washington. Additional project partners include Washington State Emergency Management Division, the US Geological Survey, Seattle Project Impact, and the Cascadia Region Earthquake Work Group (CREW).

On February 28, 2001, Northwest residents received a dramatic reminder that we live in earthquake country. The Nisqually earthquake cracked buildings, crushed cars, and closed SeaTac airport.

http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/booknow/traveling_bigone.php

Exhibition 8: Race: Are We So Different?



Originating Institution: Science Museum of Minnesota

Description: It’s a simple truth. People are different. Throughout history, these differences have been a source of community strength and personal identity. They have also been the basis for discrimination and oppression. The idea of “race” has been used historically to describe these differences and justify mistreatment of people and even genocide. Today, contemporary scientific understanding of human variation is beginning to challenge “racial” differences, and even question the very concept of race.

RACE: Are We So Different?, developed by the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, is the first national exhibition to tell the stories of race from the biological, cultural, and historical points of view. Combining these perspectives offers an unprecedented look at race and racism in the United States. *RACE: Are We So Different?* was a winner of the Excellence in Exhibition Competition at the 2008 meeting of the American Association of Museums.

Rental Fee: \$35,000 for 3-month booking plus a \$1000 resource materials fee and inbound shipping for 1 trailer load.
Size: 1,500 Square Feet
Suggested Sponsors: TBD

4.0 PUBLIC PROGRAM

Type 3: Student Installations

(May – June)

In collaboration with University of Washington, Renton High School, Renton Technical College

RHM aims to strengthen its relationship with the UW Museum Studies program by offering internships and program development opportunities to students. Each student in the UW program is required to complete a thesis project and complete two internships. RHM hopes to position itself as a venue for the students to show their work and obtain professional museum experience.

Each year, RHM will partner with the University of Washington Museum Studies department to plan an exhibition generated either by exhibition design students or by students presenting their thesis projects. Another kind of student-led exhibition might be a conservation lab that would allow visitors to observe and learn about the conservation of objects and photos by watching the work take place and talking to conservation students and professionals about their work. The project will need to be planned in advance each year with students and staff in the Museum Studies department and will change every year.

RHM might also partner with groups of students from Renton High School or Renton Technical College (RTC) to create exhibits showcasing their work or their particular interests. Building on the Museum’s experience with annual summer exhibits of artwork by students in RTC’s English as a Second Language program, for example, exhibitions would explore their experiences as new residents. Renton High School students might be encouraged to work with RHM, developing exhibits as part of their community service requirement for graduation.

Suggested Funders: Joint grants with the University of Washington to Institution of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities

Sample Exhibitions:



Intern at work at the conservation lab of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
http://www.lcmm.org/get_involved/internships.htm



In Manchester England, Museum Studies Students created exhibits about their city. Exhibits included chalkboards, photo collages, and object displays. Information can be found on their blog:
<http://www.museumblogs.org/detail/6110-digital-heritage>.



Students in the Exhibit Design course at Baylor University install their exhibit at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum.



Students in the School of History, Technology, and Society’s (HTS) at Georgia Tech “Introduction to Museum Studies” class opened a special exhibit, The Art of the Book bringing to life six elements of bookmaking: paper-making, watermarking, illustrations, marbling, book binding, and printing.

Type 4: Community Installations
(July - August)

This category comprises a range of options that offer members of the Renton community more active roles in the creation of RHM programs. In general, the approach involves the creation of a framework by RHM that structures the participation and aggregates small contributions into larger forms. For example, the Museum might devise a series of neighborhood histories that allows individuals and families to contribute objects, photographs, and information for display online and in the Museum. A model of community curating has been developed by the Wing Luke Asian Museum, but in general this would be the most labor-intensive annual program with the most potential for developing new audiences and stakeholders.



Youth Curation Project, Wing Luke Asian Museum

Tim Phillips

Sample Exhibition 1: Kids in Charge



Artwork displayed at Carco Theatre reflects students of Sierra Height Elementary School work created in the 2008-2009 school year.

Description: Working with a Renton elementary school class, the Museum will help children choose a theme that is of interest to them; kids then work with staff to create an exhibition from their point of view. For example, students might choose locations throughout Renton that are important or beautiful to them. They could document them through photography and/or painting/drawing and with curatorial assistance, display these pictures, along with historical interpretation, photographs, and objects from RHM’s collection.

Students and their families will develop a relationship with the Renton History Museum by working with staff and having their work displayed at the Museum. In addition, families will develop deeper ties to Renton and a stronger local sense of place. Families will be frequent visitors to the exhibition and become more aware of the work of the Museum and would hopefully attend future events.

Budget Required: \$2000 plus staff time
Suggested funders:
BURSst and Chamber of Commerce (funders of other school/ community partnerships).
Suggested partners:
Renton School District, Communities in Schools, Rotary Club of Renton, Renton Municipal Arts Commission, Renton Area Youth Services, Harambee

Sample Exhibition 2: Around the Globe in Renton



From Chicago's Passports to the World Program

Description: This annual exhibition is a series of celebrations that focuses on the arts and traditions of Renton’s culturally diverse population. This program provides community members with opportunities to experience and learn more about the world around them through resources in and around Renton. *Around the Globe* features authentic cultural programming representing the art, culture, and traditions of a particular country; all participating artists, performers and workshop leaders are members of the featured culture.

Each *Around the Globe* celebration culminates in an activity-rich festival held throughout the Museum. *Around the Globe* community partners could include Renton’s Latino, African American, Native American, Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese and Japanese communities. The exhibition could display items curated by partners in the community and objects could be accessioned into the collection if appropriate.

Budget Required: \$5,000
Suggested funders:
National Endowment for the Humanities, Target Corporation is a potential funder for regular, free festival days.
Suggested partners:
Renton Technical College’s English as a Second Language Program; local churches and ethnic associations

Type 4: Community Installations

Sample Exhibition 3: Renton Portrait Project

Description: A call-for-entries is made throughout the community for residents to submit a self-portrait and submit it to the Museum. Portraits are a uniform size but can be made of any material, medium or style as long as it is an original work and the artist signs a release form. Works can be mounted at the Museum with a brief description of the artist.

Community Connection: An exhibition of this type opens the Museum to everyone in the community and shows that the Museum is a place for everyone. Community members literally see themselves at the Museum and as participants in the Museum’s programs.

Budget Required: \$3,000

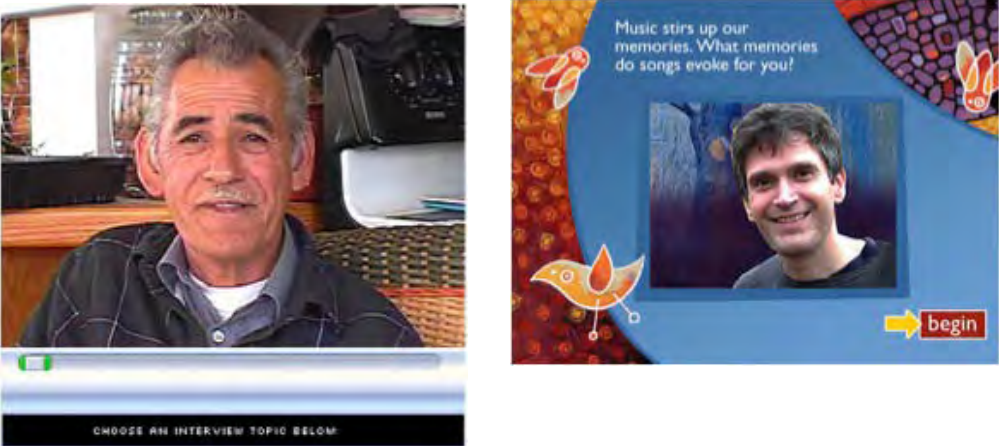
Suggested funders: National Endowment for the Arts

Suggested partners: Renton Municipal Arts Commission, Allied Arts of Renton



Art Gallery of Ontario 2006 Exhibition: In Your Face: The People’s Portrait Project

Sample Exhibition 4: Who is a Renton Pioneer?



Brad Larson Storytelling Kiosk – allows visitors to record their story or response to similar questions and be viewed by other visitors

Description: *Who is a Renton Pioneer?* explores various definitions of pioneers and reminds visitors that Renton has always been ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse. Artifacts, photos, and information about the early residents and pioneers of Renton are linked with people currently coming to Renton--new pioneers! Exhibit could incorporate oral histories, videos or text stories about their journey to Renton. RHM has an extensive collection of oral histories of Renton residents and oral histories of famous Washingtonians are available through The Legacy Project (<http://www.sos.wa.gov/legacyproject/OralHistories.aspx>). A video kiosk allows visitors to record their own Renton pioneer stories.

This exhibit links older pioneers with today’s current innovators, entrepreneurs and new immigrants making Renton their home.

Suggested Funders: Humanities Washington, “We the People” Project Grants for State Humanities Councils: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/wtpshc.html>.

Washington Farm Workers Oral Histories
http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/farmwk_intro.htm

Program Partners

“To achieve things in Renton it is necessary to partner to gain enough support.”

As noted in the Key Strategies section of this report, program partnerships are crucial to the EHP direction—both to extend RHM’s program capacity and to strengthen its relationships with the community. Products of those relationships might include:

- New program ideas
- Skilled personnel, such as guest curators and program contributors
- Use of other collections and venues
- Funding or in-kind support for programs
- Access to new audiences and new stakeholders for the Museum

Potential collaborators include:

Arts Community

Organizations and individual artists will have major roles to play as collaborators and contributors to EHP programs. In addition to direct program contributions and a pathway to attracting younger audiences, these partnerships offer the potential for RHM to access arts-specific funding that might otherwise not be available to the Museum.

City Government

One of the ways that RHM can make its program more relevant is to connect it with contemporary issues facing the City. EHP’s potential to link old and new segments of the community and to serve as a forum for contemporary issues creates real value for a rapidly growing City like Renton. Under this new framework, RHM will continue to work closely with the City to align its programs with civic needs.

Business Community

Interviews with members of Renton’s business community revealed a perception that the Museum is too inward-focused and does not seek out the partnerships it needs. The continuous need for program sponsors under the EHP direction should provide both a strong incentive and multiple opportunities for improved collaboration. EHP offers at least two new ways to provide value to local businesses. First, the higher rate of program change brings with it marketable visibility that can be shared with Renton businesses in return for financial support of those programs. Second, RHM’s increased role in community building is a basis for seeking general support from businesses that benefit from the more cohesive, creative, and civically engaged community that RHM is helping to build.

Schools

Strengthening RHM’s relationship with the local schools and the Renton School District is an important component of the Museum’s needed audience growth. Engaging students and teachers as program contributors as well as visitors could be a pathway to restoring the relationship and strengthening family ties to RHM as well.

Universities and Colleges

RHM has two existing relationships that might be strengthened under the EHP direction. The first is with the University of Washington’s Museum Studies Program. Sarah Iles, RHM’s Collection Manager, is a graduate of that program and currently teaches part-time within it. Each student in the program is required to complete an internship and a thesis project as part of the degree requirements, and EHP offers both a venue and an ongoing series of program slots for those projects. Exhibit development, collection management, and visitor research are all areas in which the UW students could help RHM while receiving valuable work experience.



SPUR Urban Center, Planning Discussion

The second relationship worth further cultivation is with Renton Technical College, RHM’s partner on the annual summer ESL exhibitions. The College has an increasing diverse student population that reflects Renton’s own growing cultural diversity. Many of the College’s programs require students to perform internships, so the College might be a source for interns and volunteers as well as a program development partner. The ESL exhibition itself seems like a valuable prototype for projects focused on the experiences of some of Renton’s newest citizens.

Immigrant communities

An important dimension of EHP is linking the stories of old and new Renton. RHM needs to become a trusted partner of Renton’s new cultural communities and help them use the Museum. All museums are currently working toward greater inclusivity in their exhibitions and collections; EHP offers concrete paths to accomplish this.

Curriculum Connections

RHM will continue to demonstrate the ways in which the Museum’s programs are connected with the relevant Washington curriculum standards will be a high priority. Each new EHP program aimed at school audiences will be evaluated and adjusted to achieve maximal alignment with those standards. A sample of a curriculum matrix for this purpose is included below.

RHM’s commitment to involving Renton citizens in the process of program development will extend to the schools. To accomplish this, museum staff might identify one or more Renton schools and work with them to develop frameworks for participation that aggregate small contributions from many students into a larger exhibition or event. For example, students might be asked to interview their parents or grandparents about a particular historical theme or event and the results combined into a larger product; see “Exhibition Types” above for more examples. The emphasis of these projects would be on meeting the needs of classroom teachers while involving children and youth in the life of the Museum.

Renton History Museum EALRs		Communication						Writing				Reading				Educational Technology																
Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) for Communication, Writing, Reading and Educational Technology		use observation skills and strategies to interpret information analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources		use language to interact in a multicultural context use interpersonal skills and strategies to work with others work collaboratively to solve problems communicate effectively with others from many cultural backgrounds				use knowledge of a topic to present information use media and other resources to present information		publish text to share with others		write for different purposes write in a variety of genres		develop ideas and organize writing apply grade level writing conventions		use word recognition to read text use vocabulary skills and strategies to read and comprehend text		build vocabulary through reading		apply knowledge of text components to comprehend text analyze, interpret, and synthesize information and ideas in text analyze use of language, style, and perspective in informational text		read to learn new information read to perform a task		demonstrate creative thinking using technology construct knowledge using technology		develop innovative products and processes using technology use digital media and environments to work collaboratively manage and evaluate information using digital tools and resources		solve problems using digital tools and resources		understand technology systems use hardware and networks to support learning transfer knowledge to new technologies		
TYPOLOGY	SAMPLE INSTALLATIONS																															
Artist Installations																																
	When Coal Was King	x	x													x	x	x				x										
	Between Two Rivers	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x							x	x									x		
	Victory Gardens	x	x			x		x	x				x			x	x	x				x										
	Renton Senses	x	x			x	x	x																								
Traveling Exhibitions (Rented)																																
	Key Ingredients	x	x			x				x	x				x		x	x	x			x				x						
	Quilts of Gee's Bend	x	x														x	x	x		x	x			x						x	
	Combat Paper Project	x	x	x				x								x	x	x		x			x		x	x			x			x
	Journey Stories	x	x	x													x	x	x		x	x			x							
	Coffee:The World in your Cup	x	x	x													x	x	x		x	x			x							
	Ladies of Lincoln's Era	x	x														x	x	x		x	x			x							
	The Big One	x	x														x	x	x		x	x			x							
	Race	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	
Student Installations (UW/Renton HS)																																
	Conservation Lab	x	x				x									x			x					x								
	RHS Centennial		x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x																		
	Thesis Project	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x				x	x			x				x				
Community Installations																																
	Kids in Charge	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x		x	x	x		x	x			x								
	Around the Globe	x	x	x			x										x	x	x		x	x			x							
	Renton Portraits	x	x	x	x		x			x				x		x	x	x		x	x			x								
	Who Is a Renton Pioneer?	x	x	x			x			x						x	x	x		x	x			x					x			

Program Operating Assumptions

Rate of program change

This plan assumes that ideally RHM will present four exhibitions per year, along with related events, classes, and other programs. It will likely also present some recurring and seasonal events not tied to exhibitions. Not all of these exhibitions will be produced by RHM. Between major installations, the Museum will close for two to three weeks as staff completes the changeover.

Hours

RHM’s current schedule opens the Museum to the public thirty (30) hours per week. The plan for EHP assumes the same number of public hours, but redistributes them to provide more evening and weekend hours for working adults and families. Audience research will be needed to determine the actual schedule, but what is suggested below would make RHM more accessible to audiences for whom the current schedule is not convenient. School visits are not now a significant part of RHM’s attendance, but could be accommodated on a reservation-only basis during weekday mornings, if schools or a sponsor could cover the cost of additional staff time.

Monday	Closed to public
Tuesday	Closed to public
Wednesday	12 to 4pm
Thursday	12 to 8pm
Friday	12 to 8pm
Saturday	12 to 6pm
Sunday	12 to 4 pm

Staffing

EHP represents a more ambitious level of programming than RHM has ever attempted, and thus it will require some realignment and growth of RHM’s staff. It also will require greater use of interns and volunteers to augment the paid staff. The following positions will be needed:

RHM Executive Director (1.0 FTE) (Existing position; new title) Responsible for overall administration of the Museum, high-level governmental and community relations, budgeting and finance, program strategy, and grant-writing and fundraising. Reports to the City of Renton and Renton Historical Society Board of Trustees.

Manager of Collections and Public Programs (1.0 FTE) (Existing position; new title) Responsible for care of RHM collections and leading development of RHM exhibitions, events, and education programs. Reports to the RHM Director.

Collections and Public Programs Assistant (1.0 FTE) (New position) Responsible for assisting with collections care and program development. Reports to Manager of Collections and Public Programs.

Community Liaison and Volunteer Coordinator (0. 5 FTE) (Exisitng position; new title) Responsible for recruiting and managing RHM volunteers and for implementing RHM’s community relations strategy. Reports to RHM Director. As EHP gathers momentum, this position may need to move to .75 or 1.0 FTE.

Administrative Assistant (0.5 FTE) (Existing position) Responsible for general administrative support, as well as coordination of marketing and membership services. Reports to RHM Director.

Other:

- Collections and public program interns
- Administrative volunteers
- Collections volunteers
- Public program volunteers
- Operations volunteers



Renton History Museum, 1946

Renton History Museum



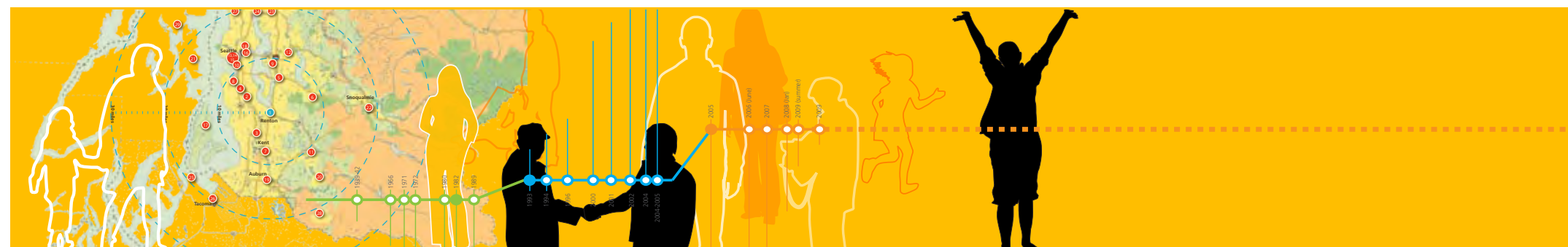
Renton History Museum, 2009

Gyroscope, Inc.



Renton History Museum, Proposed

Gyroscope, Inc.



SECTION 5 **TRANSITION** **PLAN**

Key Stages

The following is intended as an overview of key steps toward implementation of EHP. It is not an exact timeline or comprehensive list of tasks. It assumes a decision to proceed by RHM Trustees and a finding by the Museum’s fundraising counsel that a capital campaign of the required size is feasible within a reasonable time.

1. Secure Startup Funding (Estimated Duration: 1-3 Months)

Following a decision to proceed, RHM’s first step should be to secure sufficient funds to advance the additional planning and design needed to implement EHP. Ideally this will proceed in parallel with the capital campaign, but the work will need to start before campaign funds start to flow and cash flow will need to keep up along the way. Staff tasks can be shifted toward capital campaign priorities and layered over existing responsibilities, but some of the work will likely require external consultants and, therefore, funds to retain them.

2. Preliminary Program Planning (Estimated Duration: 6 Months)

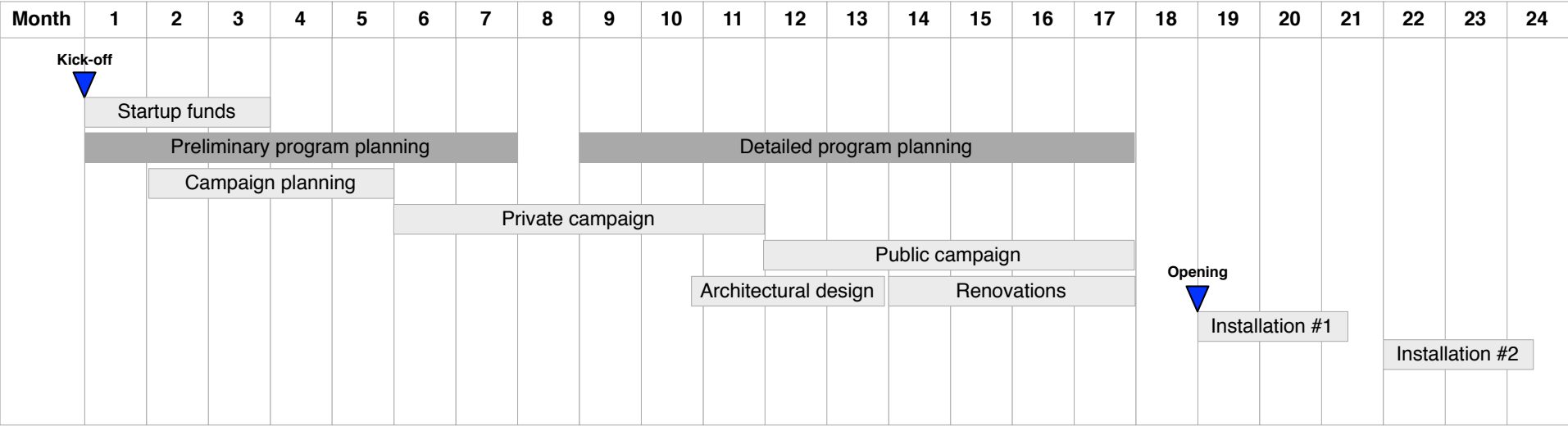
During this time, RHM staff should begin program planning for the first two years of EHP by researching potential programs, partners, and funders. Ideas will need to be analyzed and described well enough for possible inclusion in capital campaign materials. If possible, RHM should consider hiring a professional evaluator to test new program ideas with local audiences. Additionally, planning for improvements to the Museum’s Web site should be done during this phase.

Depending on the results of the campaign feasibility study described below, RHM should use this phase to scale and schedule the plan in accordance with projections for the campaign. Possible adjustments could involve reducing the rate of program change during the first year and phasing in the site and building improvements.

3. Campaign Planning (Estimated Duration: 2-4 Months)

One early expense will be to engage professional fundraising counsel to plan a capital campaign for funding the transition to EHP. The process—which include feasibility assessment, preparation of the case statement, prospect research and stakeholder interviews—are described in Section 7 of this report. Ideally the chosen consultant will have a track record with campaigns of this type in this region. This phase may also include revamping the Museum’s brand and identity.

Renton Transition Schedule



4. Architectural Design (Estimated Duration: 2-4 Months)

The drawings and renderings Gyroscope has prepared for this report are preliminary concepts describing a recommended direction rather than a finished design. Detailed designs for all building and site renovations will be needed to provide accurate campaign budgeting and to secure construction bids. RHM will need to work with the relevant City of Renton departments to select and contract with an architectural firm that can do this work.

5. Campaign Rollout

Capital campaigns typically involve a quiet, private phase in which initial large gifts are secured and a much more visible public phase in which the broader community is asked to make up the remainder needed. Campaigns do not usually go public before well over half of the total has been pledged. The exact timing and publicity appropriate to the RHM campaign will depend on the plan developed by the fundraising consultant and the progress of the private phase of the campaign.



Interactive map, SimLinz

Don Polhman

6. Detailed Program Planning (Estimated Duration: 6-8 Months)

With the private campaign underway, the staff needs to commit to specific programs for EHP’s first year of operations and to develop and design those programs in sufficient detail for implementation. Gyroscope recommends that all of the first year EHP programs involve strong partnerships—both to extend RHM’s capacity and to demonstrate its commitment to community involvement. Marketing and PR planning should proceed simultaneously with program development. During this time, RHM should launch an update to its Web site as a tool for audience building and promotion of EHP.

7. Renovation/construction (Estimated Duration: 3-6 Months)

Assuming sufficient funding is secured, transition from RHM’s current model to EHP should take place as quickly as possible to maintain momentum and community support. Although more detailed planning and design will be needed to confirm both the schedule and budget, the process likely will require approximately several months. During this time, RHM will close to the public to dismantle the existing exhibition, complete architectural renovation and site improvements, and acquire needed equipment. The Web site, social media, and email newsletters will be critical for maintaining contact with the community during this time.

8. Installation (Estimated Duration: 1 Month)

As soon as all critical architectural changes are complete, RHM will begin installation of the opening exhibition. Because RHM does not have much experience with rapidly changing programs, Gyroscope recommends allowing more time for this initial installation than for later changeovers.

9. Startup

RHM will reopen with the first EHP project in place as soon as possible after architectural and site renovations are complete. The success of this first project is critical to the long-term success of RHM and EHP. The marketing and customer service associated with RHM’s change of direction are as important as the programs themselves. RHM should plan for higher levels of paid and volunteer staffing during this time, at least through the first changeover.

10. First Changeover

Although Gyroscope has proposed four exhibitions per year for RHM, the actual rate of change may be less depending on staffing and program funding. In any case, the first changeover may test RHM’s capacity in ways that the initial install does not.



Citizen History: I am __cybil gustafson

11. Stabilization

This post-opening phase involves remedial work to tune operations and program changeover processes as well as ongoing program development. Visitor research done during the first months of EHP operations should be used to set priorities for remediation.

A Phased Alternative

The preceding plan assumes a successful capital campaign to fund architectural and site renovation as well as flexible infrastructure for rapid program change. Gyroscope believes both of these to be crucial for the long-term success of EHP but acknowledges that the campaign could take considerable time to implement. Another possible approach would be for RHM to transition to EHP as quickly as possible and to launch the capital campaign in parallel with the new program direction. This approach would require clearing the existing exhibitions from the gallery immediately but would defer any significant site or building renovations until sufficient campaign funds were secured.

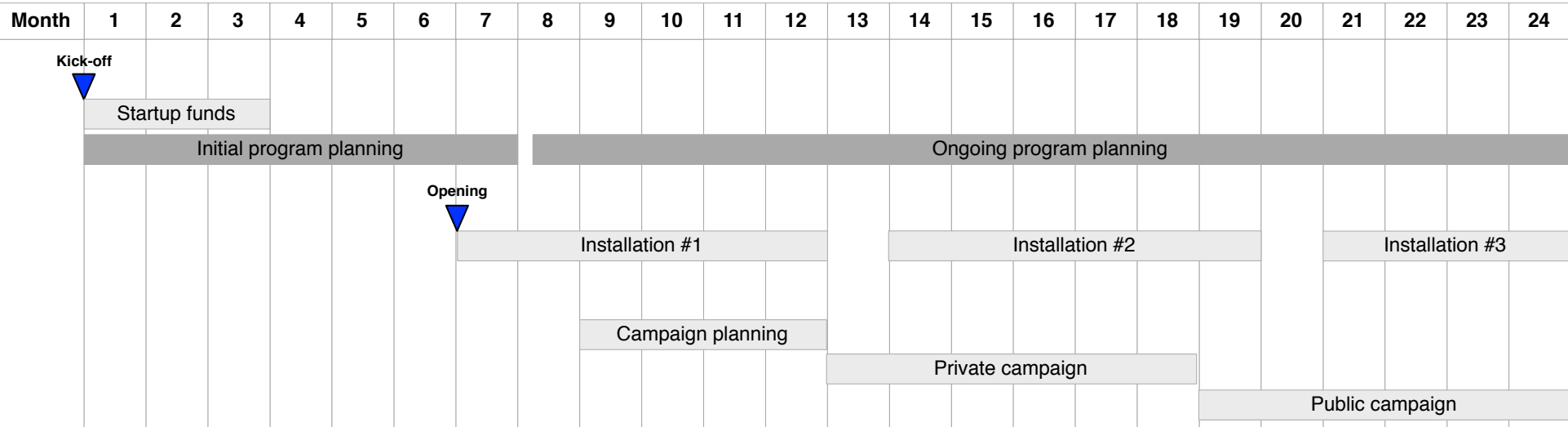
The benefit of a quick start would be to demonstrate RHM’s commitment to change and community involvement as soon as possible and thereby to generate momentum and community support for both the Museum and the campaign. It also would help the organization to build confidence and capacity, and begin to attract the partners it needs.

However, it must be acknowledged that this approach entails significant challenges. One is the need for startup costs for which funds are not currently identified. RHM would need to see if those funds could be redirected from existing budgets or other accessible sources. A related challenge would be the need to create an ongoing stream of program funding without the buffer of capital campaign support for the first few exhibitions. This challenge could be mitigated, but not eliminated, by slowing down the rate of exhibition turnover—perhaps from four to two exhibitions for the first year. Nonetheless, the RHM staff and Board would have to move very aggressively to redirect funds and to secure new partners and sources of support.

But the biggest challenge of all would be the need to create widespread awareness and excitement around RHM’s new direction without the additional time, publicity and resources afforded by the capital campaign. If the Museum were to create a high quality project to kick off the EHP, but fail to capture enough attention and support in the community, it might not get a chance to regroup. RHM’s new direction might be discredited before the community fully understands it. For this reason Gyroscope recommends that the Museum complete at least an initial assessment of capital campaign prospects before deciding on this phased approach.

Regardless of which approach is adopted, the success of the first EHP exhibition will be critical to establishing the Museum’s new identity and rebuilding its standing in the community. With reduced time and resources available to develop that first project, the Museum would have to work very hard to meet the challenge. The RHM staff and Board will need to weigh the risks of transitioning quickly with limited resources against the risks of setting a threshold that is too high to be crossed quickly.

Alternate Transition Schedule





SECTION 6

FACILITIES

The Site

Although EHP will require less in the way of capital improvements, expansion or new construction than some of the other proposed strategic directions, minor modifications to the site and building will be needed. A full architectural plan is beyond the scope of this report, but Gyroscope has developed a preliminary concept for the changes to the site and building to assist in the development of the capital cost estimate and to help communicate RHM’s new vision. In addition, we have created a list of recommendations for infrastructure upgrades, new fixtures and furnishings and outdoor site improvements to meet the needs of this new vision.

Gyroscope studied several options for developing the site with the following goals in mind:

- Goal #1:**

 - To create much needed visibility for the Museum as a whole and specifically, for each new Experimental History Project installation. With approximately 25,000 vehicles passing by every day, this intersection is a prime corner to draw attention to the Museum.
- Goal #2:**

 - To demonstrate significant change at RHM, perceptible by fast moving traffic as well as pedestrians. This requires a bold statement, yet also not become a distraction to drivers. The intent is for those who pass by either on foot or by cars to ask themselves, “What’s going on there? I wonder what it is? I better stop by to find out.”
- Goal #3:**

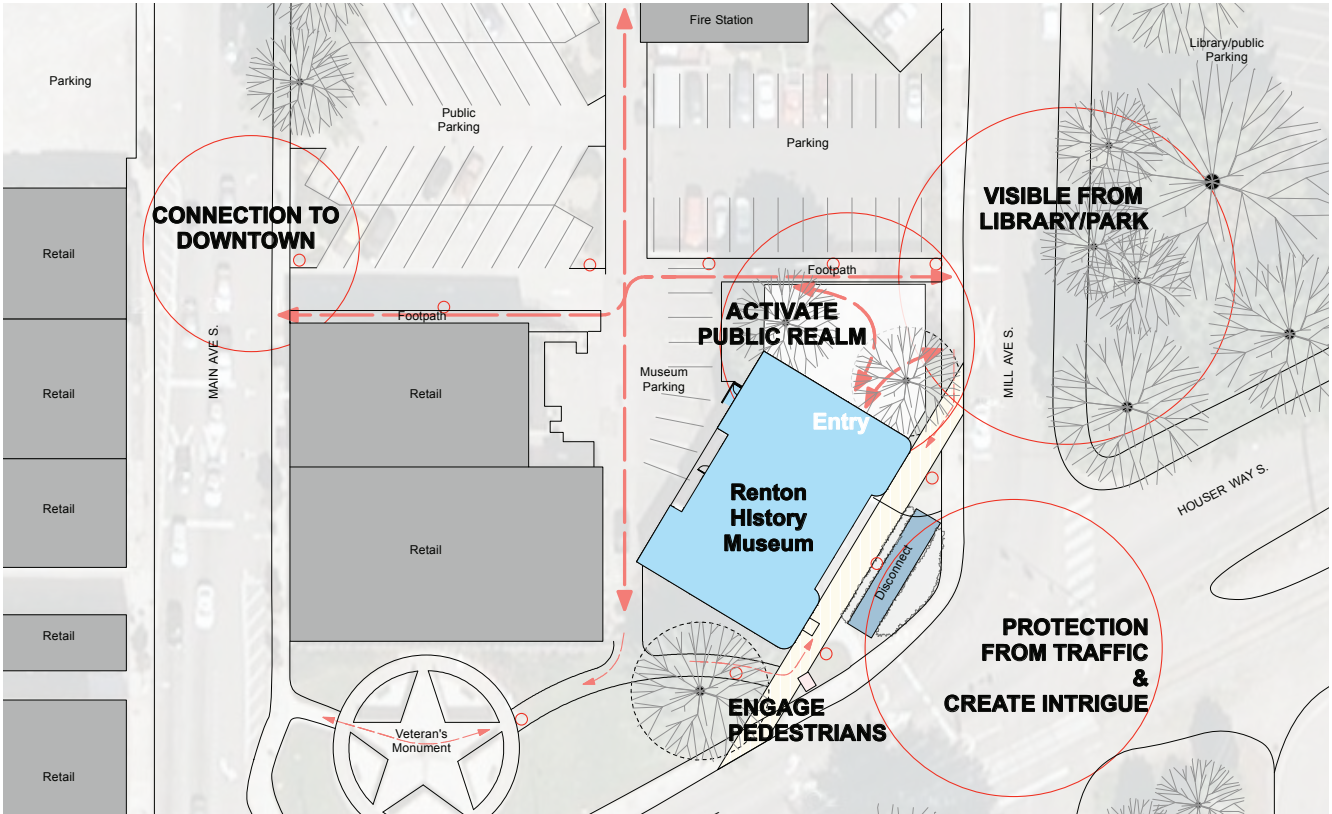
 - To develop the site to demonstrate civic and cultural connections to the downtown, the Veteran’s Monument, the Library, and Park. By activating pedestrian routes around the Museum through interpretive elements, banners, benches and lighting, the Museum becomes a new cultural corner, leading the way for future development of a cultural district in Renton. With its strong adjacencies to the Library, Cedar River, Park and Downtown, the Museum can develop new programs and partnerships through EHP that utilize these nearby civic assets. Collectively, these new elements raise the visibility of the Museum and strengthen the pedestrian corridors.

- Goal #4:**
- To leverage the Museum’s existing assets. Both the Disconnect and Chief Seattle Fountain are currently under utilized on the north side of the Museum. Re-locating the Disconnect to the front of the Museum affords much higher visibility for this artifact and, because of its size and scale, creates intrigue while providing some protection from the visual and audible noise from traffic. It also offers reassurance to pedestrians by acting as a physical barrier from the fast moving vehicles, enabling the public to be comfortable on foot and to interact with the front of the Museum.

The new site plan also takes advantage of an existing footpath connecting Main Avenue with Mill Avenue. By locating the new main entrance of the Museum along this path and adding a new outdoor gathering place, the visitor arrival experience is strengthened from both directions. The fountain now becomes a central and appropriate, iconic element at the beginning of the visitor’s entry sequence.

- Goal #5:**
- To extend the Museum’s ability to offer more programs, events, amenities and services. Adding a covered outdoor area at the new main entrance of the Museum will provide a gathering space for Museum visitors, facility rentals, special programs, performances, school groups and summer camps. During summer months, this space can be used for workshop projects, festival activities, outdoor seating for the café, or even catered events.

- Goal #6:**
- To establish the EHP brand as a new perspective on history, emphasizing the experimental in all aspects of the Museum. The site improvements will include additional lighting, electrical, WiFi, sound and signage systems. Each new EHP program installed at RHM will be coordinated with exterior banners and signage to advertise and market the new show and the EHP brand.



“RHM needs a radical and visible approach. . .”

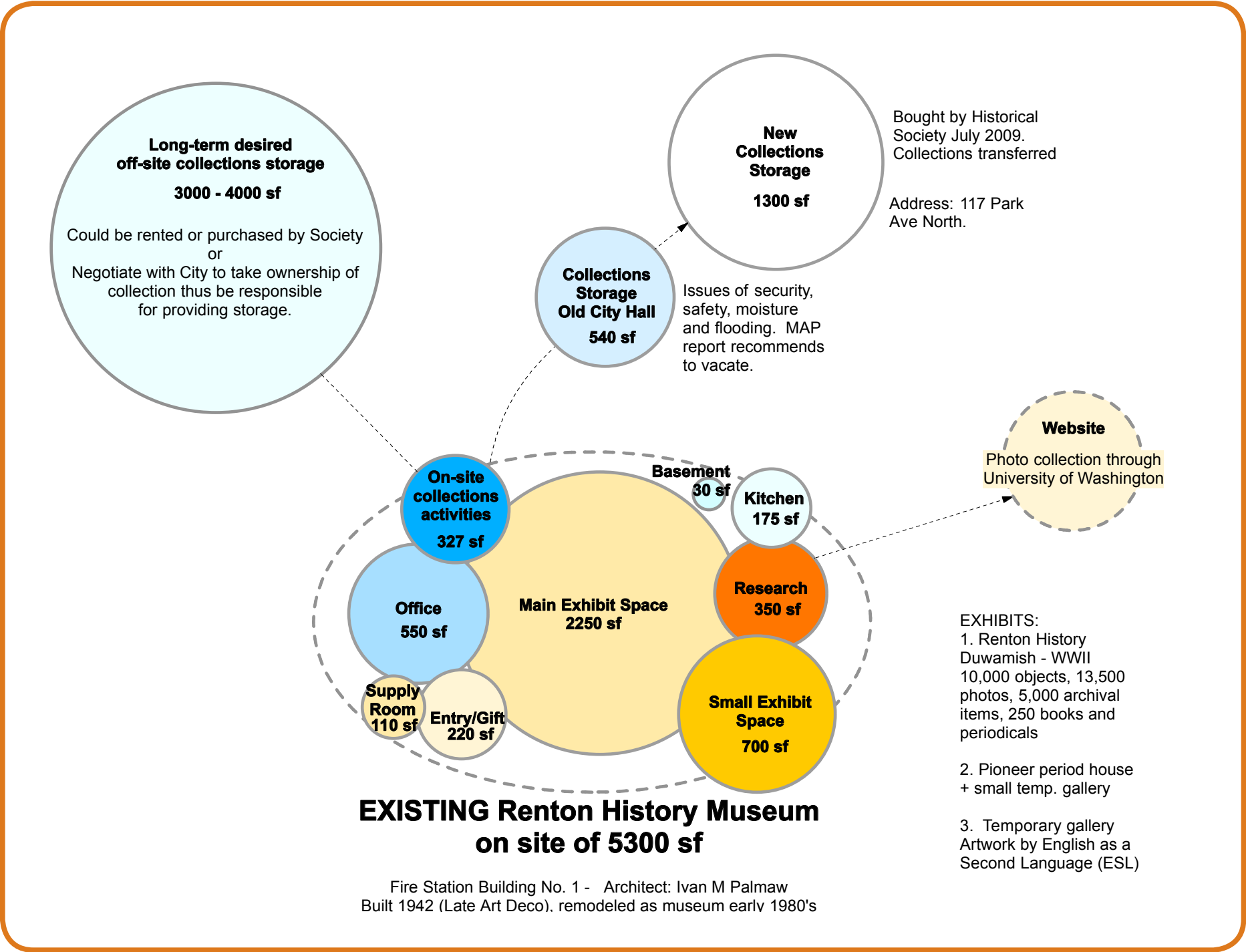
The Building

The building was originally built by the WPA from 1939-1942 as Renton Fire Station #1. In 2005 the building was listed on the Washington State Historic Register and, according to a 2006 quarterly report by RHM’s former Board President, Bob Hunt, the building is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although the building has tremendous appeal and, according to the CAP architectural assessment prepared by Arrow Rock Architects in January 2008, is structurally sound, its potential for renovation or expansion is limited due to its historic significance. Nonetheless, some changes to the building have occurred over the years, including covering up the original fire truck doors on the main façade, blocking up a smaller window on the northeast corner, and the recent addition of a small canopy over the main entrance of the museum.

In the “What We Heard” web conference on September 23, 2009, Gyroscope evaluated each of the five conceptual approaches with regard to impact on the building. Of the five options presented, only one, the Renton Cultural Center option, would require major expansion or relocation. All of the other four options were a good fit with the existing footprint, structure and character of the building.

Existing Museum Space Allocation



Architectural Improvements

In November 2009, the Museum selected the Experimental History Project as the preferred concept for final development. Gyroscope prepared recommendations for renovations to the building, created bubble diagrams, conceptual floor plans and renderings to communicate these changes.

Goals for these improvements include:

- Respect for the historic structure
- Add much needed visibility for the museum in general and specifically for the main gallery
- Create views from the pedestrian path into the Museum as well as views out to the site
- Bring in controlled natural light to the main gallery and to other areas of the Museum
- Open up the interior plan as much as possible for future flexibility
- Increase preparation space and improve back of house adjacencies
- Improve operational efficiencies
- Provide a more welcoming arrival experience with visitor amenities

In order for EHP to be successful, the building must be flexible enough to support frequent programmatic changes and ranges in exhibition methodologies. While the exact needs of future EHP projects are unknown at this time, infrastructure that would be typical for a changing exhibitions gallery at a much larger museum will be needed to operate efficiently. Some of this infrastructure already exists, such as the high truck bays open to the trusses and ceiling above in the large exhibition gallery. However, other improvements will be necessary. Although most of these upgrades are relatively minor, inexpensive and could be gradually phased in over time, the efficiency and advantage of capitalizing them up front will lower the cost of individual operating program budgets in the future.

The following items represent the type of renovations, improvements and infrastructure we recommend for RHM:

Changes to the Building Façade

Gyroscope recommends removing the infill panels now covering the original garage doors at each of the three fire truck bays at the front of the building and replacing them with energy efficient storefront glazing systems. This will provide much needed visibility into the Museum as well as views out to the logging disconnect from the main gallery space. Energy efficient glazing will reduce operating costs while allowing natural light into the Museum.

Another change to the building we recommend is the re-location of the Museum’s main entrance to the northeastern façade. By locating it here, the visitor arrival sequence takes advantage of existing pedestrian pathways, is closer to existing parking, and allows for a larger gathering space outside. Because there already exist windows in this location, alterations to accommodate this change would be modest. One other set of doors would be provided at the back of the building to accommodate exiting requirements.

The most noticeable change on the exterior of the building would be the addition of an outdoor gathering space on the northeastern side of the building. This new covered courtyard provides multiple locations for major new building signage, marketing of current EHP programs, sponsors and donors, schedule of events and operating hours. Exterior lighting and audio systems will add security, effects for evening events, and to highlight Chief Seattle fountain and the Logging Disconnect.

We also recommend removing the canopy over the front entrance.

All of these changes will help position the Museum as a leader in cultural development, in sensitivity towards historic preservation, and in demonstrating resource conservation initiatives.

Changes to the Interior

Other minor changes include removing interior partition walls, changing the location of some other partitions, providing ADA compliant restrooms for staff and visitors, and re-configuring some staff spaces for better efficiencies.

We also recommend incorporating another Museum asset, the frieze above the display cases, into a new front desk at the entrance.

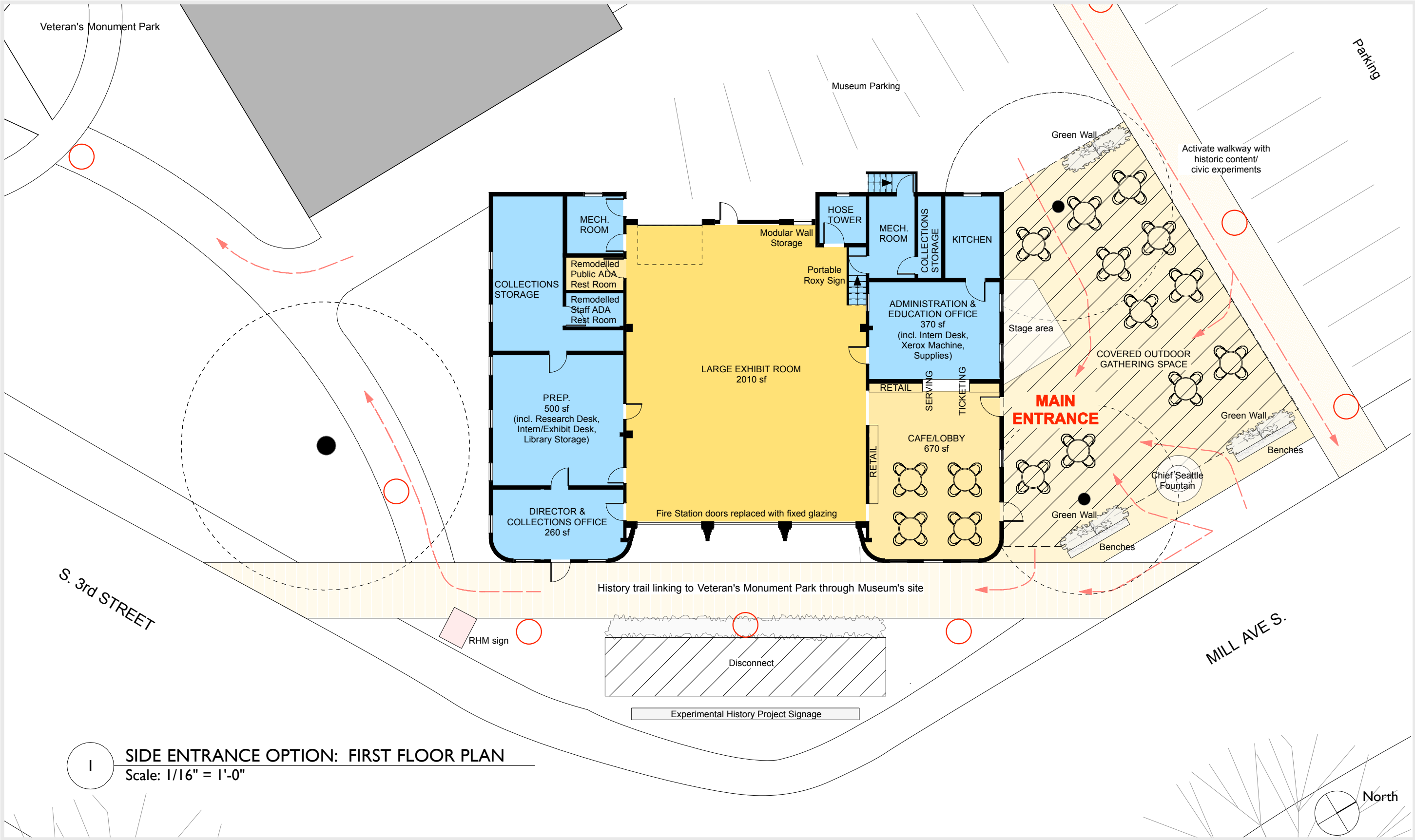


History House Sculpture Garden

fremontnatives.com/2009/07



Rendering of Renton History Museum New Entrance



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Program-Related Equipment

Movable Wall System

Some installations may require one large open gallery space, while others might need smaller, more intimate areas. RHM should invest in a movable wall system for temporary partitioning needed by various EHP projects. Although it would be possible to build temporary walls for each project, a set of reusable partitions would allow faster changeovers and lower the operating costs of individual installations.

Lighting and Sound Systems

The Museum needs to be able to have more capacity, control and range in the lighting system, due to the differing needs of each project, both for the indoors and outdoors. Many new LED systems are both flexible and energy efficient. Gyroscope recommends purchase of enough basic lighting and sound equipment to cover the needs of the initial set of EHP exhibitions. More specialized equipment can be leased or purchased gradually as needed.

Display Casework

Some of this display furniture will be specific to individual programs, but there may be some reusable pieces that are worth acquiring up front after initial program planning is well underway. Having a set of reusable pedestals, vitrines and display cases in a variety of sizes on hand will help keep installation costs down over time.

Media Equipment

Maintaining a small inventory of computers, projectors, large LED or LCD display panels, and related equipment will reduce the time and cost of installation for specific projects.

Data Network

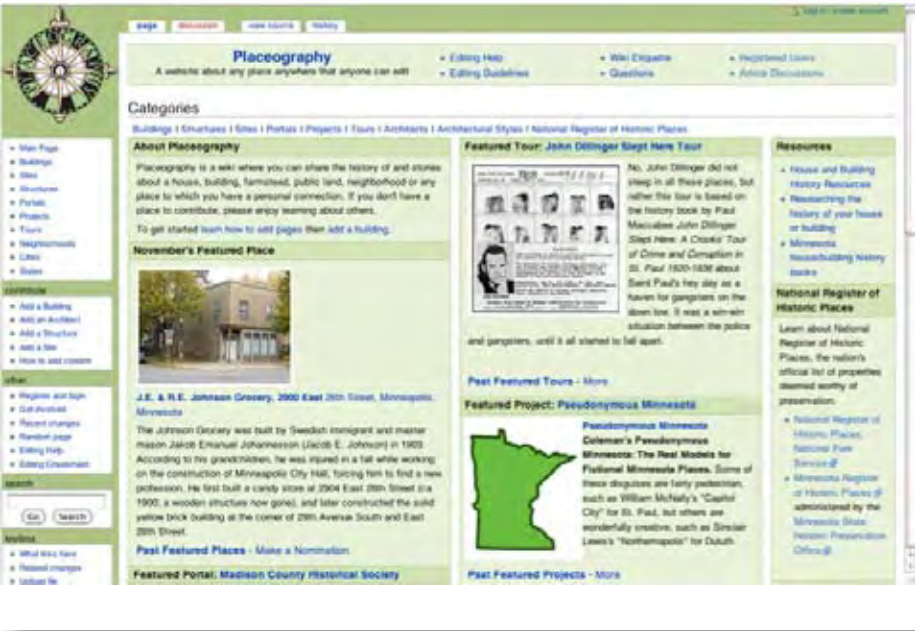
Integration of online and on-site experiences will be important to EHP programs. Gyroscope recommends that RHM install a high-speed wired and wireless data network throughout the indoor program spaces with wireless available to the outdoor plaza, too. The wired (Ethernet) portion would mainly serve the needs of installations that required live data from outside RHM. The wireless would be for visitors and staff with laptops and smart phones, although some installations might take advantage of this, too.

Large-format Printer

The capacity to produce some smaller exhibition and program graphics, signs and labels in-house will reduce program costs long-term.

Updated Web Site

Gyroscope recommends RHM move to a single Web site built on top of an accepted, non-proprietary content management system so that staff can easily update the site without specialized expertise or extra expense. This new site would consolidate RHM’s identity around the new EHP brand and support rapid change of content, dialogue with and among RHM users, and the archiving of user contributions and other digital assets that RHM wishes to save and share.



www.placeography.org

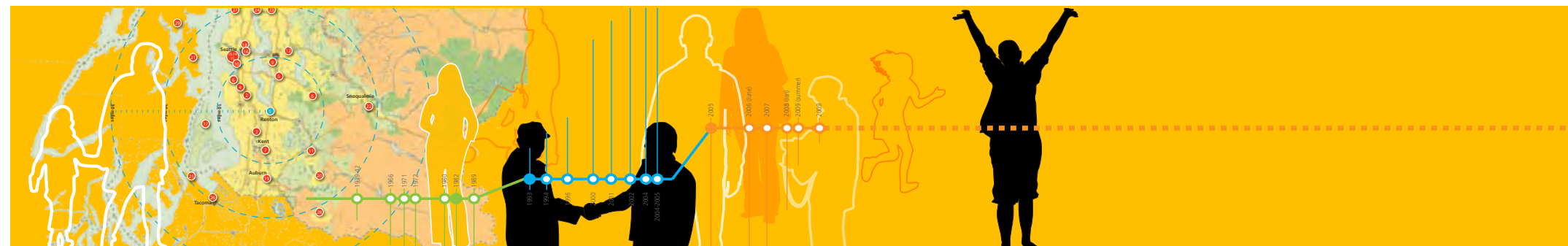


www.themintproject.org



©Gyroscope, Inc. 2010

Rendering of Renton History Museum with Logging Disconnect



SECTION 7

BUDGETS & OPERATIONS

Capital Budget

The capital budget is organized under the following categories:

Site Improvements

As noted above, Gyroscope has proposed several site improvements that will improve RHM's visibility from the street, strengthen its connection to the downtown and the library, add outdoor program space, and improve the visitor arrival experience.

Building Renovations

Proposed changes include adding the large windows at the front of the building, moving the visitor entrance, adding a café/program space and redistributing some office and workspaces.

Program Transition Costs

This category represents the cost of moving from RHM's current program model to the EHP. It includes exhibit furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) critical to ongoing EHP operations and 1 FTE of program staff to assist with developing the new programs. Although some of these items may move to the operation budget at some time after opening, Gyroscope recommends capitalizing them during the transition period both to insure a successful transition and minimize the long-term cost of program changeover.

Analysis of Capital Sources of Support

Implementing the Experimental History Project will require significant capital expenditures, as outlined elsewhere in this report. Gyroscope recommends that the Museum retain qualified fundraising counsel to conduct a fundraising feasibility study to determine likely levels and sources of support. This section of the report is not a substitute for such a feasibility study but instead is intended to assess possible sources of support in general terms.

Preparing For A Capital Campaign

The Process

Successful capital campaigns are carefully planned and choreographed, usually with the guidance of professional fundraising counsel. Some of the key steps are:

Campaign Feasibility

This stage of the project includes an internal assessment of the Museum's preparedness to conduct a significant campaign and an external assessment of the level of interest in the donor community. Fundraising counsel will interview members of the board, staff, and external stakeholders.

The Case Statement

This document describes to prospective donors what it is the Museum proposes to accomplish through a capital campaign, why it is important to the community, and how the Museum will achieve its goals. The Case Statement is a joint effort of the staff, board, and fundraising counsel.

The Pre-Campaign Report

Based on the results of research to date, this report outlines key elements of the campaign plan, including the financial target, schedule, structure, budget, and staffing. The report draws on interviews with stakeholders, identifying which features of the plan have greatest appeal to donors. It also typically includes a fundraising pyramid illustrating the levels of giving that will be necessary for success.

Campaign Rollout

With the plan in hand, the fundraising campaign can begin with confidence on the part of everyone involved.

Board And Staff Fundraising Roles

Institutional fundraising is a shared responsibility of the Board and Staff.* Successful, growing organizations work to develop a Board/Staff partnership to achieve fundraising goals, and each party has a unique role as described below.

Trustees provide fundraising leadership when they:

- Envision the future of the Museum and adopt measurable goals to achieve it
- Make a personal gift to one's capacity, and ask others to give
- Show full commitment with 100% participation in Trustee giving (all Trustees make a gift)
- Introduce new people to the organization who may become financial supporters
- Open doors to others who may give (using business or personal contacts)
- Support Development Committee activity
- Collaborate with Development Staff to carry out fundraising actions
- Speak favorably about the Museum to others in the community

The Staff's fundraising role includes:

- Develop plans and fundraising strategies
- Write grant proposals for major gifts
- Draft letters for Board members to sign
- Manage individual donor stewardship and relations with institutional donors
- Manage donor communications and publications
- Coordinate fundraising activities and programs
- Encourage Trustees to take action on behalf of fundraising
- Accompany Trustees on solicitation visits for major gifts

*Source: The Rydar Group

How Large a Campaign?

What level of support might Renton History Museum hope to achieve in a capital campaign? One clue is the experience of other history museums nationally. The American Association of Museums reports the following typical results for history museums (from 2009 Museum Financial Information):

• Percent engaged in a capital campaign	20%
• Median goal	\$1,750,000
• Median operating budget	\$220,000
• Median attendance	9,086

Locally, several history museums are currently engaged in capital campaigns:

- Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle is engaged in a \$40 million campaign for their move into the landmark Naval Reserve Building at Lake Union Park, of which they’ve raised \$17.6 million.
- Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle has raised \$20 million towards a goal of \$65 million, which will fund purchase of land, construction of a 65,000 sq ft museum and cultural center, and expand their endowment.
- Gig Harbor Historical Museum has raised \$9.6MM towards an \$11.1MM capital campaign. A complete list of donors is available on their Web site at www.harborhistorymuseum.org/HonorRoll.html
- Highline Heritage Museum is launching an \$8.5MM campaign to build a new 15,000 sf facility.
- White River Valley Museum has raised \$1.2MM towards a campaign goal of \$1.6MM for the renovation of Mary Olson Farm.

The estimated capital cost of Experimental History Project outlined elsewhere in this report is below \$1 million. The data from other museums both nationally and locally suggests that a capital campaign of that size is a reasonable target for Renton History Museum.

The Financial Climate

The current economic malaise has seriously affected fundraising for cultural institutions of all types, history museums among them. It is possible if not likely that the three local museums listed above might have completed their campaigns more quickly in a more favorable fundraising environment. The timing of the campaign and the impact of the local economy on philanthropy are topics that the Museum’s fundraising counsel should address.

Potential Sources of Support

Government Support: Federal

There are several federal agencies that support museums, chief among them the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS offers grants up to \$150,000 through competitive bidding. Renton History Museum has prior experience with this agency, having received a grant of \$2,325 from IMLS’s Museum Assessment Program (MAP) in 2005.

Since 1999, IMLS has awarded 126 grants to museums in the State of Washington, including several history museums. Grants for 2009 include:

- Burke Museum Association, \$149,998 to integrate museum programs on a college campus
- Northwest African American Museum, \$136,801 for an assistant curator
- Walla Walla Valley Historical Society, \$56,165 for an exhibit
- Wing Luke Museum, \$150,000 for a project to engage communities

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is another possibility, but their grants are extremely competitive and would likely require partnering with other organizations. However, NEH funds are available indirectly through Humanities Washington, a private foundation funded in part by NEH and the State (see below). RHM has secured Humanities Washington funds in the past, mostly recently for the *Key Ingredients* exhibit.

Renton History Museum’s possible relationship with the University of Washington could open up additional sources of funding, because the University may be able to attract grants that the Museum alone could not. For example, in 2008 the University partnered with the Woodland Park Zoo and the Learning in Informal and Formal Environments Center to develop a model of university-community collaboration, funded by a grant of \$278,141 from IMLS. The University might well be interested in similar collaborations with Renton History Museum.

Government Support: State And Local

The primary agency providing significant support to history museums in King County is 4Culture—both special program funding as well as general operating support. 4Culture has supported Renton History Museum in the past, including over \$59,000 in grants from 2007 to 2009 for special projects and operating support, and is a likely source of support for the Museum’s capital improvements as well. From 2006 to 2008, 4Culture provided over \$80,000 to White River Valley Museum to support the campaign to renovate Auburn’s historic Mary Olson Farm, and an additional \$30,000 in general support and special programs.

Another agency providing support to history museums in King County is Humanities Washington, a private foundation funded in part by the state and NEH. Humanities Washington provides matching grants of up to \$7,500 for local projects, and up to \$10,000 for project serving a statewide audience.

Private Support

Private support, which includes individual philanthropy, corporate donations, and private foundation grants, is essential to a successful capital campaign. The sources of private support vary considerably from one museum to another.

National Foundations

Renton History Museum is more likely to attract funding from local than national foundations, but there are exceptions. One is the National Center for Historic Preservation, which made two grants totaling \$13,500 to the White River Valley Museum for their campaign to renovate Mary Olson Farm. Another is the Kresge Foundation, located in Troy, Michigan, which has long provided support for capital campaigns across the country. These two examples are not intended to be exhaustive but rather suggestive of fundraising opportunities at the national level.

Potential Sources of Support

Local Foundations

There are many foundations at the state and local level that could be interested in participating in a capital campaign at Renton History Museum, including several that have supported the Museum in the past. These include:

- Sam’s Club Community Foundation
- Muckleshoot Charity Fund
- Renton Community Foundation

It is beyond the scope of this report to develop a complete list of local foundations or to evaluate their potential, tasks that should be assigned to fundraising counsel. By way of example, following are lists of public and private institutional donors to the current capital campaign at the White River Valley Museum and Gig Harbor Historical Museum.

White River Valley Museum Institutions Donors (as of 2007):

- 4Culture
- Auburn Soroptimists
- Beardsley Family Foundation
- Heritage Washington
- King Conservation District
- King County Council
- King County WRIA 9 Waterworks
- McEachern Charitable Trust
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

Gig Harbor Historical Museum Foundation Donors:

- **\$100,000 to \$249,999**
Confidence Foundation
Morris Foundation
M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust
Sequoia Foundation
- **\$50,000 to \$99,999**
Ben B. Cheney Foundation
Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation
- **\$10,000 to \$49,000**
Unger Foundation
Forest Foundation
Gig Harbor Rotary Foundation
Grindstone Foundation
Lindgren Foundation
Key Foundation
Bechtel Group Foundation
DeFalco Family Foundation
Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation
The Meacham Foundation
Howard S. Whitney Foundation
- **\$1,000 to \$9,999**
The Babare Foundation
Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation
Glein Family Foundation
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation
Greinke Family Foundation
Keiter Family Foundation
The Dan and Pat Nelson Family Foundation
- **Up to \$999**
Bank of America Matching Gifts Program
IBM International Foundation

These particular foundations may or may not be candidates for Renton History Museum, but they illustrate the range of options available and the dollar totals that others have achieved.

Annual Support

In addition to the capital campaign, the Museum will need to continue to generate funds to support annual operating expenses. The capital and annual fund drives need to be closely coordinated. The American Association of Museums reports the following as typical sources of annual support for its members:

- 74% of museums nationally receive support from private foundations.
- 47% receive support from corporate foundations.
- 61% receive support from corporations.
- 88% receive support from individuals.
- 65% receive support from fundraising events.

(Source: 2009 Museum Financial Information, American Association of Museums)

Operations Budget

Following is an assessment of the incremental impact of the new Experimental History Project proposed for Renton History Museum. The assumptions and budget numbers presented are for a typical operating year after the EHP is complete and operating. Capital budget and start-up expenses will be addressed separately.

Hours of Operation

The museum is currently open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM, for a total of 30 hours per week. This financial plan assumes that the museum will continue to operate for 30 hours a week, but the days and hours may vary, with greater emphasis on evening and weekend hours to accommodate working adults.

The museum will be open to school groups by reservation but not on a drop-in basis. School groups may attend in the morning by reservation when the museum would otherwise be closed. The White River Valley Museum, which is normally open only in the afternoon, uses this model to support school visitation while limiting overall public hours.

A possible model for operating hours would be to open RHM Wednesday through Sunday with later hours on Thursday and Friday.

Project Expenses

Assumption is that Renton History Museum will offer regularly changing exhibits and programs, totaling two to four new projects per year.

The Museum will maintain a supply of movable walls, cases, lighting instruments, and audio-visual hardware that can be used to support each new exhibit. These items are carried in the capital budget and are not shown as operating expenses. Similarly we assume that the Museum will have some in-house capacity to print exhibit graphics and interpretive panels.

The model for this approach is the Tempe History Museum in Tempe, AZ, which produces one to two community-curated exhibits per year at a cost of approximately \$5,000 per exhibit. Tempe’s temporary gallery is 1,700 square feet, slightly below the size of RHM’s main gallery. Based on this experience, Gyroscope recommends budgeting \$5,000 -10,000 per new exhibit, inclusive of materials, supplies, and audiovisual but not of staff time, printing, or capital items listed above.

Gyroscope recognizes that some exhibit projects may require budgets larger than \$10,000. For planning purposes, we are assuming that most of these projects will be grant-funded.

One source of off-the-shelf traveling exhibitions is the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit Service (SITES), which offers exhibits on a range of subjects. SITES exhibits typically rent for anywhere from \$250 to \$1,500 per week plus shipping, for a tour of 6 to 10 weeks. For planning purposes, Gyroscope is budgeting \$10,000 for one traveling exhibit per year.

Staff Expenses

Staff plan is assumed to include four (4) full time equivalent employees (FTE’s).

- Executive Director (Current position, new title)
- Manager of Collections and Public Programs (Current position, new title)
- Collections and Public Programs Assistant (new position)
- Community Liaison and Volunteer Coordinator (1/2 time)
- Administrative Assistant (1/2 time)

Other staffing requirements, including floor staff, assisting with collections, and public programs are covered by docents and unpaid interns.

Of the four paid FTE’s, the Executive Director’s and Administrative Assistant’s salaries and benefits are covered under City budgets. The other 2.5 FTE’s are paid from Renton Historical Society funds.

Assumption is that the 2.5 FTE’s paid from society funds average \$30,000 per employee for salary and payroll taxes.

Other Operating Expenses

Assumption is that the City will continue to pay expense items that it currently covers, including facilities and landscape maintenance, utilities, some printing, and IT. These items are assumed to be unchanged from current levels of support, with the possible exception of site maintenance, which may increase modestly.

Incremental Expense Summary

Temporary exhibit program expenses	\$40,000
Staff expenses (one FTE above current)	\$30,000
TOTAL INCREMENTAL EXPENSE	\$70,000

Total operating budgets

Renton History Museum’s operating expense budgets for the years 2005, 2006, and 2007 ranged from \$350,971 to \$280,261, or approximately \$320,000 in an average year.

Average year prior	\$320,000
Increment	\$70,000
Estimated future operating budget	\$390,000

Operating Income

The Experimental History Project should generate additional revenues from three sources: earned income, grants, and sponsorships.

Earned income

If attendance rises to 8,000 as projected, then revenues from visitors should increase proportionately, including entry donations, memberships, and sales from the store. Assuming an average of \$2.50 per visitor, the Museum could expect to generate \$10,000 per year incremental to existing earned revenues. The Museum may also generate additional revenues from classes and programs. Gyroscope recommends that RHM continue with a suggested donation rather than a fixed admission fee but consider raising the suggested amount with the launch of the EHP.

Grants

Experimental History Project should open up new grant opportunities at the state, federal, and local level. The most likely federal source is IMLS, which provides competitive grants to museums across the country. Gig Harbor Historical Society and Wing Luke Asian Museum have both received significant IMLS grants over the past few years. State grants could include both the Washington Humanities Council (up to \$7500, with match required) and private foundations. In addition, particular exhibitions or projects will open up opportunities for grant-funding that will offset operating costs. 4Culture, King County’s cultural funding agency, will continue to be a strong funder of RHM.

Sponsorships

The changing exhibition program lends itself to sponsorship by businesses wishing to be associated with one of the temporary exhibit projects.